A Woman's Heart

Olive Ranson

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Manuscripts
Found in the Papers of Katherine
Peshconet and Edited by her
Executor

OLIVE RANSOM

"Rede me and be nott wrothe
For I saye no thynge but trothe."

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This book is inscribed

To the Memory of

KATHERINE PESHCONET

And to the Memory of

All Women of like Histories

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A WOMAN'S HEART

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I.

> But I must utter what the voice within
> Dictates, for acquiescence dumb were sin.
>
> JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

WELL, I love you. I am not ashamed to say it. And you shall lead a better and broader life with me.

If you had not been hemmed in by the metaphysics of the schoolmen, by fastings, prayers and offices, would you have just that naïveté and abounding faith that whatever is is right?

How different my worship! As the years passed to my majority ever thinking with a glow in heart, "So much larger in knowledge! So much nearer work!" Always prostrate before knowing; tor-

turing my soul because of slow gains in learning; palpitating and quivering within the penetralia of my ideals. I, too, had fasts and vigils.

And now you say this missal and breviary hold all—I have nothing more to seek—only to be lowly of soul and observant of what priests teach—oh, yes, the phrase is "what the church—the holy church—teaches," I had for the moment forgotten. You advise me to pour the eleventh century wine of these books into the twentieth century bottle of my brain.

You are not good and you have not faith enough? Ah, if you were not and had not you would drop your belief in self-assumed authority. You will not? What hold it has on you! How can you subject yourself to the dictum of those desiccated monks and bishops? Such abnegation of desires and personality is servile. To walk without a cane or crutch—that is to be strong.

But suppose I admit your doctrines and cry "Credo." What then? You

are the farther away. I of your faith? Then you are more than ever remote from me, no longer the one of all the world it is a delight to be near, but a consecrated priest—of a sacerdotal caste. It would be a sin, instead of the wine of life, to love you.

The council of Trent more than three hundred years before you were born forbade you to marry. Because you could perform your parochial duties better if I were to help you? Every good man has more than double strength when rightly aided by a good woman—every good woman more than double strength when rightly aided by a good man. We should be strong together.

God was before the council of Trent, dear heart. When he bade you love me, he bade you marry me. You yourself acknowledge there are abuses in your church. You will not sacrifice your life to one of the greatest—that would be cowardly.

But given things as they are, might I not buy you off? My having you, you see, is all a matter of gold. For payment of money other popes have released from vows other priests and even bishops. Talleyrand of Autun, you know, married after years of a life that had never been blessed by the clergy. Why not a similar concession nowadays?—even if you have not entered Talleyrand's vestibulum to the married state. His price upon you would be high, if the pope knew half your worth.

I shall lead you away. What if the archbishop does thunder?—and the pope? What then? They will not let you do as God directs. We will issue our own writ of independence. We are Americans—you at least in birth if not in spirit and tradition. We will make our own church, which self-cleans itself from abuses, and in which God alone reigns. How serene our days after this nervous strain! I shall convert you. Soon you will not believe in their conjuring power,

and you will smile at their anathemata, as the great world smiles and still whirls on. With Shelley you will say:

> "How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic roar!
> The weight of his exterminating curse
> How light! and his affected charity,
> To suit the pressure of the changing times,
> What palpable deceit!"

But you do believe in them? No, *not* believe—you mean. You cannot say you believe—believe, for instance, as you believe the sun is shining over there on the lawn. You cannot say that, dearest. You mean you can *not* believe in their self-constituted authority and power. Take the myth of the apostolic succession. It is easy to show that bishops or presbyters of the early church were in many cases installed by the laity, and that their later confrères accepted ordination in like manner. That ends the whole papal pretence. You can prove the opposite, also? Even if you can, the claim of the bishop of Rome is beset with doubts.

I know nothing of the church's doctrines and its theology? Teach me, then. You have said the doctrines are in the creed. And what is theology—Christian theology? No more than men's speculation built upon the simple sayings of Jesus. In it are submerging depths of human narrowness and human unsympathy. I, too, can speculate, for have I not also the sayings of Jesus? What do I want, except as the expression of a pious soul long ago foredone, or for their evolutionary values, of Augustine's opinions? Over him I have the advantage of fifteen centuries of our human race's growth in knowledge and wisdom. Jerome, Bonaventura—they were doubtless good men and lived up to the best of their times. Let us live up to the best of ours.

"Truth is truth at all times," you say. That is just what I claim—absolute truth is. But there is theological truth—relative truth, and truth only so far as their human sympathy and science lighted the theologues who pronounced it. Go into a

second-hand bookstore; take down any old theological tome. How antiquated its teachings. How absurd its pronunciamentoes! As antediluvian as Noah's boat.

But still further regarding the divinity of Jesus—is not his loftiness and beauty of soul the greater if we look upon him as a man? He is divine, the "son of God" in the simple, old, poetic language. All men are. He sanctified humanity, most human of humans, by showing to what heights men could rise. He is one of many men imbued with a profound god-consciousness, who after death have been apotheosised. Our poetising faculty, especially as it exists in simple minds, builds legends and marvels about the birth and death of such men. These stories, cast in form by succeeding generations, perhaps by disciples who have mirrored their inspiration and are possessed of a calmness and poise which the prophets along with their furor could not have, become popular history. Is there

not, oh faithful heart, a geographical distribution of the avatars of mankind just as there is a palm belt and a fir-tree belt about our dancing globe? Prophets of distinct religious enthusiasm, so far in our race's history, have been born only within certain latitudes.

II.

Forgive me that I hear thy creeds
  Unawed and unafraid;
They are too small for one whose ears
  Have heard God's organ played;
Who in vast, noble solitudes
  In simple faith has prayed.

ELLA HIGGINSON.

WHAT did they say to you in the "retreat" that set your soul a-quivering? Of the duty of a priest? Of his peculiar sanctification? What frightened you? Not their "logic" certainly. What can it be?

Last night I sat till ten watching the light of your study windows, wondering what kept you, fearing that your Pharisaical superiors were blaming you for some act they turned into a peccadillo. You wanted to come, did you not? To

gain a grain of comfort I was saying all the while to myself, "He certainly loves me. He is not trying me willingly. But he little realizes that this waiting for him to leave the church and learn to stand alone is eating my life and breaking my heart."

You do not know that constantly with me is the fear that in the end our love may not be the strongest bond. It is the best bond, yes. But mere habit has overruled men at times—and you have been taught such absurd estimate of custom and convention. Custom and convention have crippled your church in her past; they have appealed to her reverence and consideration and dictated her course in critical junctures. They may direct you. Do not choose the meaner life. Do not let lower estimates affect you now. I cannot have been mistaken. Do you want to be separated from me? Do you never wish to hear me say again, "Dear heart, I love you"?

I yearn over you as a mother yearns

over her child. Women in their latent motherhood often have this emotion towards lover and husband—more often, I think, than men have the sense of fatherhood towards the wife.

No, not all the priests who have left the church have been evil men. A tale, dear heart. Look at the other side. See the letters, and "Table Talk," and formal writings of Luther. They evidence that he was not the licentious, drunken pretender your church holds him to have been. And Knox—was he not for many a year a reputable priest? If he had not followed some other dictate than his ease and advantage, he would not have had the stormy after-life which he suffered partly in exile and always in onerous work. And others of those reforming priests—for instance, Zwingli; and men not priests but leaders, such as Calvin, Ulrich von Hutten, Giordano Bruno; and other men—hosts of them—were they not represented as monsters of iniquity

to those unable to come within reach of the broadening spiritual impulses of their time? But upon such radicals what has been the verdict of Prince Posterity? Their very persecutors have profited by their great works.

The narrower and more orthodox members of every sect abuse those who broaden beyond church and creed limitations. And when a man openly and boldly leaves the old faith, their contempt and revilings and innuendoes upon his convictions and morality sometimes outlast their lives. Men to-day who have left orthodoxy and dropped the doctrines of their ecclesiastical fathers—have they not been spurned by the more conservative, even if their lives are blameless? Think of those you know about. Over in Belgium there was till lately Alphonse Renard, at one time a Jesuit priest, an authority in his science of oceanography, whom his ecclesiastical limits could not restrain.

You must get absolution from my

touch? You fear to lose your soul by leaving the church and marrying me? To lose your soul! That seems to be your ever-present fear. Since your very infancy you have been hypnotised to that frame of mind.

But by your teachings, one to whom Catholicism is offered and who rejects it will suffer eternally the torments of hell. You do not love me in spite of your protests, for, holding me in your heart, you would choose an eternity of hell with me rather than an everlasting heaven apart from me. And if, by-the-by, you have not done your duty to the church and shown me her way—and have you, carissime?—then are you responsible for my soul and its sufferings—and you cannot have a heaven, or at best it will be a meanly selfish one.

Shall I ever learn that it is best for us to lead separate lives? No, because it is not. But what would have been our happiness if our interests had been united?

—if what you cared for I could have shared in, and to what I undertook you could have lent your sympathetic interest. How fair—your gentleness always at hand, your discreet counsel ever ready, your strong arm, your shoulder—beloved, such separation cannot be wise.

Temperate conventionalities and secondary moral laws melt before the fire of my love and longing for you. If your church were a person who knew me it would say I was right. Its rules must have been made against the character of women according to the distorted, ecclesiastical, misogynous judgment of olden time—very much alive even to this day. But we American women are not that. If I were such as your ecclesiasts paint women I should never have loved you—never have met you. Is there no power to which you can show the difference and, showing, gain our union? A thoroughly equipped corporation like your church should have such a referendum, some mediation between individual will

and the will of the Roman congregation.

You say the Catholic reference of all authority on conduct to church teachings and council decrees is better than the appeal of the non-Catholics to public opinion, to what the world would think. But the appeal of non-Catholics is not to the world, or to what it thinks. Its test is, *is it right?—is it true?*—is it in accord with universal moral law?—is it *right* to do this thing? Is it *True?*"

III.

My true-love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for another given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven:
My true-love hath my heart, and I have his.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

BELOVED, desire to put my arms about you is so great that I cannot forbear writing a word and on paper giving you an embrace. I have thought of the news you brought on Friday. Over and over again it has turned in my mind by night and day. But we must not lose hope, my life. That I say every moment. I said it yesterday in the first waking moments, not yet wholly conscious of the weight of sorrow. All this morning I was thinking what I should say. Do not misunderstand. I dread the talk and want you by.

"Prophete rechts, Prophete links,
Das Weltkind in der Mitten."

Only the doctrines of absolutism and passive obedience I dread to meet, and I know they will form and direct all their sentences.

You see it is difficult to cope with such antagonists upon the ordinary grounds of reason, love and nature—and these are the three principles upon which I stand in my relation to you.

This suspense—waiting to see what Rome will do. I feel like taking you in my arms, and covering you with my garments, and saving you, keeping you, loving and adoring you forever. But instead here I am suffering. To see how one would aid one's heart's desire and to remain motionless! The torture of it! Oh, to see you for a moment—only a moment —quite alone.

I dreamed last night that you came to my bedside and said, "The archbishop has consented. We shall be married and I shall have a parish of my own!"

The impossibilities made me speechless until, "At last it has come!" I cried. "Our life shall be a foretaste of heaven." And you clasped me close with tears in your dear eyes. You had made a full presentation of facts to the archbishop and powers abroad, I dreamed, but since you feared the case would be decided against you, had said nothing.

Oh, to be in your restful presence morning, noon, and night. God made us for each other. The native harmony and understanding that is between us cannot be chance concord.

Only last night I was thinking, "Does he ever recall nowadays the parsonage we talked of in the country—the häuschen where we were to be unspeakably happy —fair nature about us and God over all?" —a little, low house painted soft grey by rain and wind and sunshine. Moss is just starting in crevices of the roof. It faces the sea and behind stands a copse of pine. Lilac bushes open their aro-

matic blossoms in one corner of the yard, and just beyond a brook pours its sweet waters into the salt.

To our friends when they come we offer rush-bottomed chairs, and blue china on the table from which to eat our hominy and honey and eggs. Brown-speckled hens lay the eggs I gather in a melon basket. You wear a linsey-woolsey coat which I make for you, and I a homespun dress. Weed the garden? Yes, and water the flowers morning and evening. Do you laugh? Oh, you will with delight when that home is reached.

Sometime after we are married—sometime when you are heavy with sleep—I shall pull the covering aside and kiss you right there where the heart beats. And you will say, half-waking and putting out your hand, "What is it, love?" And I shall answer, kissing you again upon the forehead and nestling close to catch your sleepy mood, "I was only kissing the place where our dear heart beats."

Don't tell me that instead you shall abide within the walls of a monastery with silence as your portion. No. No, you shall not. Promise me you will not go. It is wrong—a sin, as you say. The body is beautiful. It is not wicked, as monastics preach. God gave it, building it during millions of years through the upward lift of matter. And God gave its promptings to be carefully and reasonably guarded. Oh, promise you will not enter so terrible a life and kill yourself by fancied discipline. It is awful, an incredible rage in humanity, a distorted East-Indian craze legitimised in your church —that gross lie against our best impulses, that insult to God.

My arms tell me to say they are aching to clasp you once more, and my lips are hungry for your lips, too. Let me see your finger under a microscope and try if I may find that elusive quality which makes your touch so melting.

Oh, the joy I had this morning when I

rose in bed, pulled my curtain, and after lying in watch a moment saw your black-robed figure against the white stretch of snow beyond. It was like a return of salient youth to the aged. My heart quickened and tears wet my eyes for sheer delight. So it was last night when I saw the gleam of light from your window. To see it I had left the Beethoven symphony. But what are all symphonies compared with nearness to you—even though you are behind the stone walls of yonder house? I watched your light till it went out, and purposely kept myself awake until I was confident that you were calmly sleeping.

I have all various loves for you. In our joys I am your wife. In your distresses I feel your mother—to take you in my arms and coddle you. I wish you were not more than three spans long that I might enfold you, kiss you, press you against my heart and unblushing tell you all that warms my lips and now emboldens my pen.

The intense unswerving love and dog-like fidelity of woman! I know from myself what it is. Fancy you and me caught in a March blizzard upon a Dakota prairie. I know what I should then feel happiest in doing—in wrapping my clothing about you and covering you with my body from sleet and cold and death. I can fancy myself with my arms about you saying, "Are you warm, dear heart?"

But it is now Sunday morning, and through the soft wet air and sunshine I hear your voice intoning the first service. There is ever the same ineffable sweetness and charm in its sound.

"I think, O my Love, 'tis thy voice, from the Kingdom of Souls
Faintly answering."

Now if I should save your soul—not in the mediæval but modern way—would your life be happy? If you had moral conviction. Don't you see, dear, that your faith is but an attitude of mind, for

the most part an obsolete phase of civilisation? In the midst of our twentieth century science it is an electrified corpse. You believe in it, you say. But you do not know anything else. Your church authorities forbid you to hear or read any other teachings, or to see other religious expression. You follow Paul in much of his fiery narrowness. Why can you not also broaden to his advice of trying all things and holding fast to that which is good?

Your religion has beauties, its long historic growth and background, its many wise and good prophets, apostles and messiahs of the oneness of man with the divine. They have clung to the truth and sometimes tried to right the lies. Why give them up? Theresa might be the zealous ascetic and egotistical practician still. In the real, human good she did she is Saint Theresa to all human souls.

When I hear your music and petition to the Mother, I am with you full of

yearnings for womanly guidance and sympathy and the sweet, hovering quality of the eternal-feminine. This longing is in every soul—men's and women's. It was there back of our Christian times when men called upon the chaste Artemis, and maids of Periclean Athens marched through the limpid air—*διὰ λαμπροτάτου αἰθέρος*—over the marble steps of the Propylæa to the shrine of Athena and the precious Phidian glories shining in the cella's dim light. Our reformatory ecclesiasts lost a line by which to hold subject their fellow-men when they put womanly force from their churches. All women long for womanhood as well as manhood in uplifting tradition. Again men blundered when they called God "He." God is neither he nor she. Then why forever say "He?"

The art of your old cathedrals—their beautiful outlines, their tender pictures, their enchanting carvings—is potent. They may lead one momentarily to forget your grossly material and revolting

conception that the body of Jesus is lying within the shrine. And your liturgical proceedings, your incantations, the millinery your priests put on, the dramatic effect and scenic display they aim at—to carry to the imagination of believers the faith that God, like humans, is hypnotised by genuflexions and denial of our self-respect—all such things sicken a pure faith, weaken a sturdy intellect.

IV.

Ich unglücksel'ger Atlas! eine Welt,
Die ganze Welt der Schmerzen, muss ich tragen,
Ich trage Unerträgliches, und brechen
Will mir das Herz im Leibe.

HEINE.

THIS morning I know where you are, for the old women are going along the roadside with their beads. If belief in your myths could cover me, I should buy a string and go along too. Then would be saved great pain.

But the immaterial structure about you is not divine. It is not even good or right. It is unholy because it selfishly destroys many helpless human lives just as it destroys yours and mine, and turns to ashes the loves of men and women. Comfort to some weak souls it may bring—in reward to their deference to its fables.

But the comfort it might give, and the happiness! Its spiritual consolations might be greater if its merciless laws and dogmatism were wiped away for ever. You might be my husband and still carry hope to the sick, aid to the orphans, cheer to the discouraged, help to the stumbling and fallen, and be the sweet, charitable adviser beloved of God and men.

I do not say this in play. Tears are in my eyes and emptiness is gnawing my heart. It is the ache of a love that despairs of fulfilment—which endeavours to realise that it has no place in the future hopes and plans of the one it adores. It aches all the time steadily, by day and by night. Because of it I cannot sleep. If I cannot sleep I cannot work. So the idleness of gnawing away my own heart and mind—pinioned like the poor aider of men of Promethean legend, and preyed upon by a hunger—and watching for some glimpse of you through the unfriendly foliage. Think of such hours. Now and then a little hope will start.

But some frosty dogmatism of your utterance nips it before it has fairly burst the soil.

Now they are singing the "Agnus Dei," and I am sitting by the window to hear your voice and thinking what the elements are that bind you. Form is the main. That is clear. (There is your voice again. I could hear one word "domine." Sound of the people's kneeling and rising comes clearly, the air is so still.) And shall we be sacrificed to form, I say? My soul cries "No." Your rules change. This rule that separates us cannot exist. It must change. Then shall we be sacrificed? No. No. No. We shall suffer, as we said, if we forestall public opinion. But we shall be right, and I would rather be right than be pope. We shall have each other. The power that makes for righteousness shall be on our side, and with God's aid and yours I can carry any burden.

But your rules do change. It was formerly an unheard-of thing for a woman to

sing in your churches—because ecclesiasts taught nasty things about women. In some countries the prejudice is almost as strong as against the marriage of priests. But of late years in how many of your churches have women been singing? Can you not, with the idea of God and his judgment, superior to any creed or petty ruling, or lip-worship, and with the tenderest and most loving care my heart can give—can you not do what is right? Dearest, I ask this a thousand times. To see those qualities I find in you loved and honoured! I cannot give you up. I have tried and I cannot. I will go anywhere—only let me have you.

Ah, if you were not a priest, dear, if you knew women, you would know that the delay of a word is all the difference between light-heartedness and gaiety, depression and gloom. When I expect a letter and none comes, I cannot be happy. This morning the sun is at his shining, and the birds in their first spring

songs. But joy of life is through a veil. The letter which you promised came not. Yet when I see you after such a time, all the agony and sharp remembrance of the agony fade at sight of your face and the happiness your presence brings.

When I look about on all this rising tide of spring and ask myself what is the clearest and most beautiful expression of God—the budding leaves and tender green of new foliage, the blossoming trees, the sly jacks standing in their pulpits down yonder shady ravine, the violets purpling the earth, "the naid-like lily of the vale," the liquid call of the oriole, the even-song of robins—none of these is God's most loving voice and sign of presence, but my very heart of hearts, which you are, that is the clearest and most beautiful word God has spoken. Thou art God's best message.

My life began again when I met you. Until then I had been one with eyes and saw not, and with feeling and felt not. The day I first spoke to you there seemed

a dawning of a new life, a resurrection of things of another life, a renewal of vital force within me. I lived, but with a new spirit.

Whenever I hear the music from your church I listen, and wonder if you are there, and hold my head towards it, and endeavour to discover from the sounds whether it is your voice—save when you are away, and then I pass hastily saying: "It is the funeral mass of some poor soul; or mayhap some saint's day."

The music is sweeter at vespers when you are there, the rites seem actually holy and God is present in body—if God can be anywhere in body. But the body I see is your body, and it is the God in you I adore.

But why do you repeat the "Hail Mary" so many times? Jesus said, "Beware of vain repetition." If the spirit of the mother of Jesus is not hard-hearted, or deaf, or inattentive, she must have heard one heart-felt supplication, or two

or three at most. What fortune, then, in repeating the same word thirty times? Is it not "vain repetition"? If not, what sort of repetition is it?

Such rhythmic repetition has its effects. It lulls the mind like a cradle song. It *is* a cradle song—as perhaps the church knows. It hypnotises. It magnetises the poor, tired, untrained minds that make up the mass of your hearers. It produces curious mental phases. I have never yet seen a Catholic who did not impress me as suffering atrophy of certain of the mental faculties. The wide-awakeness, alertness, individual energy of the Acatholics is replaced by a sort of intellectual somnolence, which, I suppose, is induced by repetitions and hypnotising ceremonial, and reliance upon authority.

As to the converts of which you yesterday spoke, they are, here in America, like those your church makes in Rome—of Anglo-Saxon stock I speak—few other than the intellectually maimed, halt, and

blind. Do you think that with the Irish and Italians coming from Europe, and the French Canadians immigrating from the north, your church will gain a great part of our teeming country? New England rocks and their scant attrition would be hardly a fat or fertile setting for your unctuous ceremonial, or the weak convictions and characterless masses its prevalence brings forth. What a replacing of the granitic character of the Puritans!—and the simple truth of the early Dutch!

But so in numbers it is impending. After moral elevation has builded, ecclesiasticism comes to reap the riches of plain living and high thinking—foreign priests and French nuns and, under the azure depths of Kentucky, that absurd old fantasy, a silent monastery. We have become a rich country. Priestcraft thrives best where luxury gives ground to pride and superstition and ignorance and poverty. With luxury ecclesiastical graft becomes easy. Seeing this is a difficult thing to a real American. For it means

the disintegration of our dearest foundations.

If we had not builded a great Puritan nation, and grown strong and rich and opulent, priests would not be flocking and multiplying here and putting in a drivelling claim about "first possession." First possession! Aside from a few French in the age of faith, they waited till ease and riches were at hand.

Those jeers at the Puritans which your colleagues are so fond of making—they are ungrateful. If it had not been for Puritan self-sacrifice, Puritan tenacity, Puritan moral elevation, you would not find a home in the country to-day. The Puritans strove for Liberty—liberty to think according to their conscience, liberty to speak out their thoughts, liberty of self-expression, liberty to love liberty. They produced some of the greatest peoples, some of the greatest government, some of the greatest conduct in the private affairs of life, some of the greatest poetry, some of the greatest prose of the world, and the moral

impulse they fought and died for has come to be one of the great possessions of mankind for all time and for all lands. If in times of peace they used force to keep out aliens whom they judged fatal to their community interests, it was the force that an unarmed husbandman takes at sight of some seemingly evil creature. The tools they used, remember, were the simplest inventions of the ecclesiastical ingenuity of your Inquisition.

To me the Puritans and their works are one of the noblest expressions of our human race in its struggle with superstition and the diabolism of priestcraft. No people but the Jews has shown a greater religious emotion, and none has surpassed them in a living sense of the moral law.

Catholicism is the religion that will supervene in America after the dry rot has seized upon the energies of the people—never before. It is the religion of disappointed hopes and ambition—for the laity. Its priesthood teaches content with narrow limitations by imposing them, and

endeavours to make up for a lack of worldly goods among its supporting peoples by spectacular display and theatrical pomp—the priests being the chief actors. Not long ago one of your archbishops crowned an image of "Our Lady of Mount Carmel" in a park in New York named after Thomas Jefferson—Thomas Jefferson, heaven save the mark! Two hundred priests, "monsignori" (supposedly thinking men) and acolytes followed the statue and led thousands of Italians. The crown was of pure gold and set with many gems, some of which were given by the pope.

How nauseating! And within a stone's throw of the whole fanfare were housed people in need of the simplest elements of decent living. "Men die of many diseases," said Sir Leslie Stephen, "creeds of only one, that of being found out."

What an incongruity in an American landscape is a priest in cassock and berretta! The idea that he cannot be a true American citizen is a right one.

At its core, it is as true now as when Landor wrote, "The popish priesthood by its institutions, its interests and its vows must always be opposed to the civil magistrate." Any man with genuine independence of spirit, loyalty to right and truth and belief in human dignity and hard-headedness—which are unfailing signets of the American spirit whether in 1776 or in these days—any man with these great possessions could not prostrate himself prone on his forehead, as your ecclesiasticism forces her priests to fall before her. His manhood would not permit the servile act. Its very hideous resignation of manly self, its abrogation of free acts, its subordination of all directions and tendencies of thought and feeling to the powers over in Italian Rome—think of the spirit of 1776 thus denying its human rights.

So it is I say that no genuine American, no man filled with the spirit that incited, founded and built up our commonwealth of these United States could ever become

a Catholic priest. "The Roman Catholics have always claimed to be independent of all governments, and to use all governments for their own purposes."

The Catholic Church must grow to Americanism, dear heart, if it would here endure. Some day American priests will become too independent to refer to Rome. It is inevitable. There will be no St. Peter's chair.

Shall our lives be marred—ruined—by passing tradition or strengthened by everlasting truth?—which erat in principio, et nunc, et semper et in sæcula sæculorum.

V.

And the poor Pope was sure it must be so,
Else wherefore did the people kiss his toe?
The subtle Jesuit cardinal shook his head,
And mildly looked and said,
It mattered not a jot
Whether the thing, indeed, were so or not;
Religion must be kept up, and the Church preserved,
And for the people this best served.
And then he turned, and added most demurely,
'Whatever may befall,
We Catholics need no evidence at all,
The holy father is infallible, surely!'

* * * * * * * * *

And dignitaries of the Church came by.
It had been worth to some of them, they said,
Some hundred thousand pounds a year a head.
If it fetched so much in the market, truly,
'Twas not a thing to be given up unduly.

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

BUT you will not be a slave to your past. It is wrong, dear heart, "an abuse," as

Catholics say. You will not sacrifice your life and mine to an abuse. And we shall be married? Some day, very soon? I cannot live—without you I do not want to live. You shall not fear to fall back in the old way. I shall be with you; and if by-and-by I must die and be lost to you, there will be the memory of our brave struggle in your heart. If the dead live again I shall be near you in spirit always. Is it so? All the rest would weigh as thistle-down compared with your love for me? Dearest heart, is it only your faith, adherence to authority and to childish ideas and ideals, that hold you? And you believe in and trust them so implicitly? I have said about them what I could of faithlessness. I have laughed at customs and usages made for other generations and centuries, and you have been angry. Showing the sawdust in your doll was sad work to both of us.

If you could accept ideas of growth! Now there is the church—that is my finger, yes, the finger for the wedding-ring

—see from what manners of a simple-minded peasantry on the shores of Galilee the ponderous ceremonial and barbarous pomp of the Vatican have grown! Think of the simplicity and beauty of life of those early Christian communists. Under a mothering sky and upon a soil that shot forth harvests sometimes of a hundredfold, and blown upon by winds that nurtured the grape and olive—with half the humanity that stirs the hardest hearts of our century, we should have girded up our garments and climbed over the rocky cliffs of Tiberius and bent in reverence before the teacher. How the native grace of Jesus, increased by years of thought and study, must have yearned for a companionship more alert and open than the peasants about him could bring! Perhaps their very condition was the reason of his accenting their work for their own souls, and so little for the souls of others.

It is all simple and calm and natural when you drop the unhealthiness of super-

naturalism and look only to the direct teaching of a master. Then we have righteousness and the natural religious emotion that stirs in every heart. Nothing there absurdly contradictory to all facts and experiences of life. And we have no more a very human institution claiming divinity by reason of its long duration, protracted life and vitality and factitious vigour; and again life by reason of its divinity.

How else should your church have survived the irruption of the northern hordes in Italy?—the dark ages?—mediævalism? Why should it not have survived? What power of half the material force opposed it? Of its age?—there are older institutions which you do not believe to be divine. Of its divinity—think of the effectless work of some of its deep-thoughted reformers. Remember Arius, Rienzi, Wycliffe and many an Englishman of Wycliffe's time, Savonarola, Socinus. And then, "A divine institution ought to convince the minds of men by

its inherent quality of truth, ought it not?" says Balzac.

Morever, was there not at the very core the inspiring dicta of Jesus? These were the principles of truth, of soul beauty, that worked its survival in its shock with the strong men of the north. They were the divine sparks of saving grace. Deep within, its soil was rational. Like all else founded in truth, it grew and increased in spite of devices and the deforming figments superstition wrought.

But the assertion regarding the development of the church and its hold upon civilization—that surely does not determine its divinity. It does? Does, then, the development and influence of some other thing, or the generation of a new idea which you would not call divine? Take any instance. The use of steam made over our material life and greatly advanced our development. Is it logical to conclude, therefore, that the birth of the idea of the use, whether in the brain of the French scientists or the English

workmen, came about through the extraordinary acts of infinite and eternal power? Does it not rather enhance your conception of mankind to know that by human reason, human patience, human ingenuity, skill, experiment and learning, the value and force of superheated water as a motor power were brought forth?

In the moral world are the men who better human conditions by the steadfast teaching of better things—are they any more the children of God, any nearer God in nativity than you and I? Were the authors, for instance, of "The Rights of Man" nearer? Are the advocates and leaders of a juster and completer social order more divine?

Of this question of the divinity of the church, her course in history is a sufficient negation. We need go back very little to learn. In France within the nineteenth century, when the opportunity for alliance with civil liberty offered, when Lamennais, Lacordaire, Montalembert led the way, when progressive democracy

was in the air, the church turned upon political liberty, and coquetting with Louis Napoleon became finally his not too reputable thrall. In writers of your faith I find these facts. Was such action precisely divine?

The church has had long life because of its precepts of love, sympathy and human helpfulness hidden in its mummeries, because of its vast material riches and the superstition it nurses in its peoples. Buddhism has had a longer life for like reasons.

Here in America the church—perhaps because of its smaller power—has done better than in France. So far it has made semblance of the idea of civil liberty. Democracy it now proclaims the church's own child—"an earnest effort to realise in society the unity of the race, human brotherhood, and the natural equality of all men, asserted in the Incarnation and Redemption." This social condition the church condemned and anathematised until its strength and liberty afforded

opportunity for the church's workings. Certain social tendencies which it now rejects, forbids, and calls bad names, after their ultimate adoption and a few generations have passed, it will proclaim —if the church still exists—as at one with itself, taught and practised by the early Christians and "asserted in the Incarnation and Redemption."

Time and again in the progress of the human race it has played this little comedy. The fallibility of it is evaded by the formulæ of ecclesia gubernans and ecclesia docens. In this case it is a question of morals and the infallible ecclesia docens which errs. Real liberty, dear heart, the church knows not. Its clergy are still its bonded slaves. How? Not to mention more important instances, in the celibacy it entails, "the bulwark of the church," which arose from an imagination steeped in supernaturalism and monstrous conceptions of women.

Moreover, it makes a priest in every way a slave, an involuntary servitor, to

his past, to his vows taken at an early age in ignorance and inexperience of himself and the world. What does the youthful seminarian know of what God shall dictate to him in the coming years, and his own being and growth demand? And if he breaks away from the priesthood, what possibilities of life, or bread-winning, or avocation are his? He is ostracised and stigmatised by all his former comrades and co-religionists, and their contempt breeds distrust in others. He must always be consistent with himself? To be true to his real self he must be inconsistent. Ah, yes, look at the root incon-sto. It is moving with and accommodating one's self to forces and agencies, few of which can be foreseen. It is seizing upon and using all that can be turned to good. And the youthful seminarian is taught a regard for formals and externals —mainly for externals. It is by externals, by sensuous rituals and ceremonies that the credulity and reverence of the ignorant many are appealed to, and the

æsthetic instincts of the few are tickled and made potential in the growth of their religious emotion.

VI.

An amor dolor sit,
An dolor amor sit,
  Utrumque nescio;
Hoc unum sentio,
Jucundus dolor est,
  Si dolor amor est.
BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX.

OH, it is well that we are surrounded, held in check by conventional trammels. Otherwise I know not what we might do. If restraints were not great about me I should give myself wholly to you to make or to mar. I should leave all, go to you, give myself to be merged in you body and soul. I should have no power of withstanding. Something greater than I bids me follow now. But there is your environment and I am "saved." Say rather maimed for life—two of us, your life and

mine made desolate. Look at the loves, the ephemeral which are united—and ours which is eternal made a cruel desolation. Does not your faith in things that are, cry to heaven? God never meant it so.

I said to a woman to-day that of those I had met, you, the most simple, direct, and ingenuous of all, modest to a fault, you had influenced my life the most, that you had given its current calmness and clarity. She is a worldly woman and was once a Catholic. She raised her eyebrows. I added that I could look back and see the change, and that I could kiss the hem of your garment for all you had brought me.

Men say you are unaffected and ingenuous. They never say you are wise. And yet you have taught me more than all the poets and philosophers and historians, for you have taught me what love is, how it can make life glorious and clothe the commonest and meanest thing in sanctified light. For is not the very

wafer you bless precious to my eyes? And of all the throng in yonder city there is but one whose look, whose thought, whose wish, whose admiration, whose touch I value. All others are automata. Their motion, talk, and concourse are phantasmagoria. I am all the time looking beyond them and stretching my neck for a glimpse of You the Everlasting.

There is about our love such a tenderness, devotion, holiness—such absence of querulous complainings, puny estimates, and deference to conventional narrowness—that I am sure it must live out of pure largeness and cleanness of spirit.

But love loves to be with what it loves. This law at times leads my great love for you to try to leap the fence ecclesiasticism has built about you and gain the companionship it hungers for. Sometimes it forgets for a moment the last repulse—your last exposition of your dogmas and the answers I write you.

Again I say love is a strange creature

that must be constantly assured of the existence of its other half. It swoons if not fed on repetitious sweet. A week passes and you do not come to say "I love you." Then I am utterly miserable. My heart is heavy and I walk the floor. But you come, and look into my eyes, and take my hand, and I ask with gathering tears, "Do you care for me?" "Love, yes," you answer, drawing me towards you. That moment I think I shall never doubt again. But again in a long separation the same empty ache begins. I must have you near or be miserable.

Three times this morning I saw you—as you hurriedly walked to the church in cassock, cloak, and berretta at nine o'clock; when you went to intone the half-past ten o'clock mass; and last when you came in through the December rain to your twelve o'clock breakfast. "Poor faint priestling," I said to myself, "how he abuses his poor body, all for a little superstitious observance!" At times

when I see you with long cloak floating behind as you walk under the elms to the church, comes a great wish to be one of those to whom your doctrines bring comfort—although your creed would to my mind be intellectual opium rather than courageous, clear-eyed faith and practice.

If I were a Catholic what work would the church find for me to do? Would it give hearty support and co-operation to founding and equipping a woman's college, Catholic inasmuch as its religious observances should be Catholic? I do not mean a high school, whose most excellent virtue is mediocrity, but a college with aims and ideals in the training and education of women, and in opportunities for carrying study beyond any women's college now established. Singular it is that the Catholics have not caught up the spirit of the education of women which has become so supreme among us Americans. You plead that the church is now too poor for such accomplishment. That

cannot be the real reason. The church has money to found colleges for men; and to build vast cathedrals. Why they do not for women is found in the church's and priests' estimate of women.

But the woman's cause is man's. What a force in disintegrating so-called prejudices, and what power of attraction such a college generously conducted would be! There is a conviction abroad in the land that the priests will not educate Catholic women because they know their power is co-extensive with the women's ignorance and subordination.

This idea of a college for women, and of superior grade, is not fanfare. About it I have of late thought much. Looking at it considerately helps one to see the enormous difficulties one would have to overcome, and the almost martyrdom one would suffer who had the movement in hand. It would mean the conversion of a majority of the Catholics to estimates of women's dignity.

When I say, "If I were a Catholic," do

not think that the pleasure of upbuilding a women's college could change my faith contrary to my convictions. But at times the question seems to be only into what terms we shall translate life—its sensations, experiences, and conceptions; whether the scientific and truth-seeking, or the discursively imaginative and fictitious. Even with your submergence, do you not ever hesitate and question if the socialists may not be right in their propagandism?—the goodness of human nature and the beneficence to society and the individual of his total expression, rather than the old theological doctrine of the inherent evil of ourselves and the need of its suppression and extirpation through asceticism? But in all this question of college foundation of one thing I am convinced—not far away is an hour when the Catholic Church will be forced to supply, in order to hold its own, some poor substitute at least of what I have hinted at.

VII.

Quhilk was not words and babling vaine,
Bot words with knawledge joynd certaine:
Quhilk in her life she did expresse,
By doing as shee did professe.

JOHN DAVIDSON.

IN his "Apologia pro Vita Sua" Newman shows the poorness of his spirit in telling how he dwelt upon dogmatic differences, and hinged the salvation of his soul upon such divergence. Why, instead, did he not brood over the hungry, wretched hovel-dwellers in his country, and base his salvation on saving their souls—and bodies?

Men are ever more and more uniting the conceptions of God and of Law—in this they are approaching with upward motion the stand of the dramas of Sophocles. Those ancient poetic expressions of the modern scientific idea are the sub-

limest word of God-ruling or Law-ruling —whichever you will—the sublimest word of the modern scientific idea that Law is "the order of the whole regarded as a process of unerringly unfolded energy," as Symonds says, and God as "that same order contemplated by human thought as its essence mind-determined."

When I see the Catholic Church ruling millions, I cannot help crying, "Alas, what is man!" I sit and gaze at your church, your school, and I am filled with wonder that enough of our kind can be found to build and maintain them. Over our broad country the houses they are putting up—to what use will they be put when the descendants of the builders become thoroughly Americanised? Will the church meet them half way, accommodate itself to them, and teach religion in a purer form? Or will it dogmatise, Romanise, papalise, ultramontagnise until its adherents who have mental independence fall away?

To explain this madness of the builders would be easier if yours were the only like institution in the world. You might with solitary example claim special and divine sanction and protection. But there are other religions just as rich—richer; just as old—older; just as blessed with stupefying ceremonial, dogmatic theologies, sacerdotal exclusiveness, self-vaunting tradition, and deadness to scientific cleanliness—monasteries, holy orders, miracles, saints, and shrines. You find them in India, in Thibet, in China. Consider this. But you will take refuge in the assertion that God sent the false forms to make way for your true. A most infamous God! so to mislead billions of human finite creatures, if that were his game.

How can they call themselves "Catholic," that word meaning universal, and yet nurse so narrow a church prejudice that they avoid as far as possible social intercourse with those who do not believe

their dogmata? The Catholic laity even attack priests if, forsooth, they associate with non-Catholics. Among Christians, Protestantism is the religion of action—to do—to achieve—to accomplish; Catholicism the religion of contemplation, inaction, unachieving, dreaming life away and submitting, ever submitting. George Moore has said this in stronger fashion. "Protestantism is strong, clean, and westernly, Catholicism is eunuch-like, dirty, and Oriental. . . . Yes, Oriental; there is something even Chinese about it. What made England great was Protestantism, and when she ceases to be Protestant she will fall. . . . Look at the nations that have clung to Catholicism, starving moonlighters and starving brigands. The Protestant flag floats on every ocean breeze, the Catholic banner hangs limp in the incense silence of the Vatican. Let us be Protestant and revere Cromwell."

But God is preparing a mighty vengeance. "Here," say your powers, "to

this great, teeming, generous, receptive America we shall flee for refuge, and there shall we build better than in our seventy years of Babylonian Avignon." Time and occasion answer with McGlynns and other recalcitrants in the first quarter century. "I defy the malignity of Rome," said Dr. McGlynn in 1888. "I give them warning now that if they attempt to hound me with the arts of which they are such masters, I will expose them. I have only told things which politicians and well-informed people have known in the past, but I give them warning that I am full of knowledge of events, the tale of which will make the country too hot to hold them. They had better let me alone."

Such men are amalgams of America and Rome. How does it work? Is it a success?

Sweetheart, your dear letter of "one and a half lines" here as I got home just now. All the way I was dreaming and

saying, "How can I make him know he is the world to me?" Oh, my very life, if you could only see me as I am—yourself as you are—our love as it is and should be in the future. To-night has much to be said. Shall we ever, even in an eternity, tell what we would? Shall we ever come to an end by "the golden bar of Heaven"?

It is long since the sentence from your lips, "Yes, I must see you again this week." My heart echoed the words, and Thursday morning I loitered, hoping to take the same train with you. Friday afternoon I watched for you an hour, and Saturday morning and afternoon an hour each in waiting. Sunday night I said to my heart, "Certainly he will come."

This is a bit of the external history of my thought for you since you were here. This terrible strain with week after week of mind revolving on the same momentous question, of devising ways and means only to have them torn from me—

is it all to be for naught? Shall I lose you at last? Why do I persist? I do not know except because you are my life. I know it and I feel it every moment. There is no escape. This love means my destruction unless you see broadly and love deeply. I cannot leave you. I fly to you from whatever quarter, as the moth flies to the candle. It is the old likeness but the true one, and I am singed and burned and bruised and lie worn and exhausted where I have fallen near you.

You say you do wrong to care for me, or say you love me—that you are already married, and to the church, and made your vows to her long ago. If you love me it is right to say so. God would not have given you this single love if it had not been right. You confess it broadens and clarifies your thought and feelings—your estimate of life. Then it cannot be bad.

Give a writ of divorce to your present spouse. Your ecclesiastical court will not

do it for you. Then take it into your own hands for yourself. Follow the custom of Rome, of a Rome more ancient but of a paganism similar to your twentieth century, renovated city's. Go back to the habit that pertained in ancient time of putting away your wife and taking another. Leave the church, my very soul, and marry me. It is a horrible octopus gigans you are serving, which every year catches hundreds of men in its terrible suckers—and you above all. I hate it. I hate a monstrosity that forces men to lead unnatural lives, and hence immoral lives. And it keeps you from me.

It is now half-past three this Friday morning, and with hour after hour of sleeplessness upon eyelids I sit here in the cool air to say once more that I think ever of you with the same strong love. This night I have turned in mind again and again the whole tragedy of our meeting. I have thought what you have done and said through these shuffling months

and years. How can I make you see that our love, if rightly followed, is the best of your life and mine?—that it is your and my right life. If you had been here these last two hours I know I could have made you see it—I have felt so strongly the desire to show it to you. But now I am too exhausted to write out the thinking. And this coming day will pass as hundreds of days have sped. And you will be driven by an infinitude of little masters; and I shall be drowned in care and anxieties which press grievously. And all that has been throbbing in my poor head will be as the works of the Pharaohs are.

I looked at my watch at half-past twelve and said, "Is he talking with his friends now?" I have been to the dining-room for bread, and I am going to ask your aid to sleep. Come, be near me. Press my hand and kiss my forehead. *'O θεὸς μετά σου.*

VIII.

She inheriting from many
Bleeding mothers bleeding sense,
Feels 'twixt her and sharp-fanged nature
Honour first did plant the fence.

GEORGE MEREDITH.

MARRIED life as one commonly sees it I have thought impossible—to live with a husband as I have seen women living with their spouses. But now!—I say, if I could only live with you under the stupidest conditions, in plain Philistine fashion, simply and frugally getting our bread and eating it at our own fireside—if I could live with you in that way it would be heaven. So to go on year after year, with our children—*our children*—God's children, my better life, yours and mine, growing about us—to watch for you, to care for you in the tenderest way—that

would be enough. Is it a dream so beautiful we shall never realize it?

If you should be with me only a week you would see clearly. No more moral myopia. You would marvel that you could have thought of living away from me, and one day you would kiss me and tell thanks for my taking you by the hand and leading you to broader conceptions of conduct. Can you not see what the world holds for us?—so much sweetness and beauty if we are together. The difficult bitterness that is over us now would then have vanished.

How strange it would be!—no longer peering down the long avenue to see the light in your window and thinking of you clad in cassock and mouthing your breviary, but sitting with you by our own fire, clasping your hand and hearing the sweetness of your voice. You should read aloud from Keats and Sophocles, Dante, Thomas à Kempis, Emerson, Clough, Arnold, Shelley, and the Gospels —our hearts would welcome messages

from all brave, strong, true souls—while I should count your linen, stiffen the fastenings of your buttons, and pick up the dropped threads of your stockings. You, too, have fancied it all? And was it fair? Your mouth quivers and eyes shine. "*Fair?*" you say. Then why not make it real?

The best place in the world would be my seat by your side. I feel you now stroking my hair. Your touch magnetises and makes me helpless. But I should be helpful, if the way were open to go to you at any time and lay my hand upon your forehead. Such freedom would increase my strength. It is your remoteness now that wears me away.

No man I know but would glory in such love as I have for you. It is worshipful. It would enwrap and protect you. It would bring you all that is best. And it would yield to you as it longs for and seeks you. Its supremest desire would be your desire, and its greatest work would be your life made perfect in right-

thinking, right-feeling, and right-doing. We should be more happy than any tongue or pen can tell. To have you always near to go to, to speak to, to touch and to love as I would—I dare not dwell on it. Fire flames along my veins at the thought of such freedom and unrestraint.

Do you remember one evening when I wore a low bodice, how you bade me good-night with a pressure of your hand—then, when your eye rested a moment on my neck, you started as if swayed by great pain and caught me in your arms crying, "Oh, love, love, can God torture me so!" And you pushed down the dress and buried your face as a man dying of thirst would sink his face to a fountain. I could not speak. I could not be angry, for great love was in my heart and in its eyes you did no harm.

When other men have talked to me of love I have been moved for them, wondered what I had done to put them in such grievous strait, and pondered whether or no it were my duty to marry

and help the sufferer out. But never was one thought like the pulsing, panting passion which now measures my days, which will never leave me but consume me or strengthen me—as we are married or not—until I drop into the grave. And shall this be my life's growth? Only writ in water because the strong finger of fate was upon you and therefore upon me?

One of your charms is that you are unbitten by the poisonous tooth of the world. There is about you the serenity of the cloister. But you mistake me. I do not hate your church. I love its æsthetic qualities for your sake. But I loathe its enslaving superstitions and grip upon humanity, and I cannot see that it is divine. Rather in its degradation of men it is satanic. I struggle to do it justice. I have made my mind as entirely as possible a tabula rasa for you to write thereon new convictions. But neither what you have said, nor the books you have given me to read, have had truth or

force enough to bring one primary principle. Vaudeville, in a measure, it seems to me—something more than half funny by which the actors get snug berths and good living in return for self-stultification, and hocus-pocussing the masses.

In your very foundation principle you start out with a pun—Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram ædificabo meam ecclesiam; or if you wish it in the possible words of Jesus—*Σὺ εἶ Πέτρος, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν.* What is the turn upon Petrus and petra—Peter and rock—but a pun? What tremendous import that pun has had in the history of the world!—whether it was genuinely said by Jesus, or is merely an interpolation of later times.

I should like to be of your theology, I say. The faith would bring me into understanding and accord with you. But I cannot think the untrue, true. I cannot do as you are doing, constantly draw lines about myself and prescribe my thoughts. God meant no one to do that.

The truth, the truth, the truth we should seek and follow. By truth only can we go forward. "Veracity," some one has said, "veracity is the vital force of human progress." But I should like to be of your faith because in that way I could come nearer to you and feel more and more like you.

But here is one of our differences. *Your* universality—that is, your catholicism—teaches that naturalism is to be despised, that the worshipful is the supernatural, a wilful and capricious exhibition of the power of God to test the credulity of men—the incoming of himself in some wafer or wax image of human construction and evincing no benefactive power in that incoming, merely a miraculous. *My* universality—that is, my catholicism—teaches that nature is worshipful as an expression and unfolding of immutable law though millions of years, that that law is as active now as in the past, and is an exhibition of the power and presence of one spiritual being of which

all that is real is the activity or expression; that we are related to this spiritual being not only as parts of nature but also as partakers in some measure of the self-consciousness through which it distinguishes itself in the world—and that in this partaking we have our spiritual life.

You say those things of yours which we call supernatural are natural to God's works and will some day be explained. But why keep men so many centuries in the dark? The superstructure that the prelacy of centuries has reared upon the sometimes true and sometimes factitious works—upon things the result of truth and things the result of morbidness —your laws and rules and authoritative assumptions—these are revolting to thinking minds. How absurd, for instance, for an old bigwig in Rome to grant Mary Howitt—who donned the Catholic theological coat in the doting years of decayed emotion and sentiment and not during the keen strength of her intellect—how absurd for some prelate

to grant that her poor old bones be laid in the Protestant churchyard beside her husband's. Why, with that husband she had spent more than fifty years of married life! Such pretension nauseates. It is akin to the church's saying you shall not marry me, and it brings to mind my sentence which angered you the other day: "The morality of your church is not the morality of God."

But now it is time for your service, and whenever I think it is time I hasten to my window to peer far down the sloping lawn and see you round the curves and corners of the walk to the vestry. Sometimes you turn your face to our windows and mount the steps and pause with your hand upon the door. The sun strikes you full in front, and reddens and gilds your velvet berretta and long cloak and wraps you in love—an unpardonable familiarity in the sun.

There is no better test of the love of a woman who is not of your faith than to see you in priestly vestments. Such trap-

pings demean a man in her eyes. Any other occupation, she says, would be more manly than this of trading on the credulity of the unfortunate and undeveloped of our kind.

IX.

The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.

My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart; behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice.

My beloved spake, and said unto me, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away."

The Song of Solomon.

You cannot submit to it. You shall not. It tortures me; it makes me writhe. I feel an imprisoned lioness who pierces heaven with her cries. Leave it, dear heart, leave the church so far as the council of Trent and its kindred speak. Have the moral courage to stand by me, your life and freer soul. You shall still be a Catholic after you are married. Other men have done what you hesitate over. There are liberal men and women in our land who will uphold you. And

your overseers, the bishops, would in the end recognise your good works.

Some ecclesiastical organisation is necessary, you say, and why not this one? Not this because of the remains in it of power-worship and the abuse of power, and also because of the remnants of ignorance and the superstition and barbarous practices that have weight in its precepts. Take, for instance, the ceremony of ordination. I shudder when I think of you going through the hideous play, of your so far forgetting your manhood as to fall prone upon your face before the church's power, the myth of sacerdotalism. It is servile, not free and noble and lofty-minded, to rig up in theatrical trappings and go through theatrical antics. It were bad if it were extravaganza. But with you it was honest reality. At the ceremony the other day the sobs of the old women told me their simple conviction. In their convulsive breath I could see what your abnegation was when you were "consecrated."

That institution in which the faults and foibles and weaknesses of humanity may best be studied is the Catholic church, its rules and doctrines. There the poor, quivering creature, man, is to be seen in his weakest and most abject moments. There he stands naked before the unknown powers of life and terrified by the hobgoblins the church has reared. Its rules and accommodations are fitted to him and for him by cunningest skill, as the intaglio fits the relief, or as the plaster is formed by the lines and seams and hair and character of the dead man's face. And like the death-mask it is the cast by which the weakness and ills and pitiful record of the impotence of men are preserved and handed down.

Marvellous it is that you do not yourself rebel at the ceremonials of the church, they are so evidently built to overcome the imagination and subvert the reason by meretricious graces. "We do this," you say, "because it symbolises such and such divine or virtuous action." "And

we do that because it signifies so and so." But in the repeated using you lose the essence, and *symbol stands alone*—not in one case in ten thousand does anything but the symbol remain.

The zodiacal light is in the western sky and the willows are pushing up their feather tips in the gloaming and pointing at the evening star. Does the star shine down upon you in your study, dear heart? And what does it find you doing? Ah, if Daphne-like I could become the willow; or shine a tiny crescent in the brilliant western light. But alas! my feet hold fast to the earth.

Words cannot say how I regret having missed you this afternoon. All day and all night I have thought of you and longed for you—I cannot tell you how much I have longed, and what I have thought. It has been one of those times when my soul is stirred and talks without ceasing to your soul.

"My soul this hour has drawn your soul
A little nearer yet."

Have you not heard? When I awoke this morning I said, "I shall see him to-day." Bitterness could not be in my heart when it is given me to look upon your face within twenty-four hours. But even when you do not come, I hold converse with you here alone in my room every hour of the day. I take you in my arms and brood over you as a mother takes her child, and I listen to the echoes of your voice and forget the world and pain and sorrow. At such moments I live. Think of being by you so that I could pass my hand down the bare strength of your arm. I should swoon with delight. Pray God it may be. "Deus vult rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci," cries Saint Gregory. So I shall at last conquer God by a certain importunity.

How foolish of you to ask if it is a consolation to be with you! To be with you —is life. To be without you is heartache and longing and pain. Can you not realise? How can I tell you other than by iteration and every act that would con-

fess it? You do not know what I feel for you—you surely do not. In your remoteness you seem at times like some one who is dead. I look at little furnishings, such as pictures and vases, and say, "He liked that," or "He saw it so and I will not change it."

Are you sitting far away beyond the trees and wishing, too? It is nearly seven o'clock. You must be. Ah, if you were here! I long for you with tears. How distant you are! And see the travail we must undergo before you are here to stay. The thought pierces one's very heart. Men and women about us are happy in each other. But no one of them has for the other such love as mine is for you, the all-embracing, all-sacrificing, all-worshipful love. Is it right that we should be so tortured and denied? Love is the best of goods and God never meant otherwise than that we should have each other in sweetness and contentment all our life long. Men and their falsities have divided us. They shall not——

So far I had written down when there sounded a familiar step. You glanced at my window and did not see me. Again you looked and smiled—the dear mouth—and raised your hat and passed. My pulses are once more growing calm. Now you are far on your road homeward. And I want you here. I want you here. I want you here. But fate may mean to grind me to a powder and have put you to turn the wheel.

Many times to-day the question has come to me what aptitude, or liking, or predilection you may have for what science? How do you think? It is to be sweet and kind and calm, I know, and therefore it is to be wholly humanitarian? I would talk with you of this, but your manner checks me. Is it because that deep in your soul you know you can never free yourself from your present powers?

The sunlight is sinking out of the western horizon. The elms are swaying and thick white clouds are hurrying across the

blue vault above. It is very beautiful. Consciousness of God creeps in the heart. The little winds moving the leaves are the little affairs of life. But now and then a strong gust, straight from the sea and bearing its burden of salt, bends the branches in long sweeps and starts the robin on his perch—such are the great perturbations of life that test our strength to yield and rise again. And we shall rise.

X.

O how can love's eye be true,
That is so vex'd with watching and with tears?

SHAKESPEARE

YOUR mother has been dead these many years?—since before you began your studies? Ah, dear love, if she were on earth I should put my arms about her and kiss her for bringing you into the world, for giving me the greatest gift one woman can bring another. She must have been a simple-minded, devout little creature, a sonsie Irish lass, of round figure, dancing blue eyes and a string of beads always in pocket. My heart warms toward her when I look on you—out of sheer admiration and love and pity for you and her.

She loved her children, you said. Here now are passing little children going in the rain to their first communion, and

clad in white and the gladness and excitement and holiday with which youth approaches steps to maturity. I wonder does the absurdity of church rule as compared with nature never strike the little creatures? Some of them look pale and faint. It is long past their breakfast hour. They are hungry and thirsty. If I were one of them do you know how recalcitrant I should be? I should run out in this pure, sweet rain and open my mouth and thrust out my tongue to catch the drops, and say God sent the rain much more than the beprayed wafer the priest would put upon it.

Again you mistake my attitude toward your rites. If they did not narrow and dwarf the lives of thousands, I should not disesteem them. If they were harmless why should I oppose? They are full of harm. They put silly, debilitating ritual in the place of honest conduct. An instance is in the woman who has maligned me. I do not know her. I did not know of her existence until the gossip-monger-

ing of her tongue came to my ears. She has given evidence the angels would not question that she has a black heart full of malignant jealousy. She lies about you and me. But she goes through all the church's forms and frequently visits a confessor—at some distance, because she hates you. Then she comes to you next morning for you to put your consecrated wafer — your God — upon her serpent tongue. And you do as she wills all the time her heart is burning in hatred. Do not these facts shock you? Not once have they come, but time after time. Her jealousy and vindictiveness are raging, her mouth is lying, and you go on placing your God-wafer within the thorny hedge of her teeth.

These are some of the practical outworkings of your rules and superstitions. Do they not make you most miserable? —make us both most miserable in our separated lives? Yesterday I saw a sad and solitary figure going along the roadside. And after a little the sad and

solitary figure came back. This they do also.

And yet you persist. How can a human being, having come to man's estate, cling to and have faith in the mummeries and droning? It is because of their hypnotic effect in childhood. No stronger comment upon, or proof of, the effect of environment in the forming of men and women can be found. You really do not believe them. Real faith puts its belief into practice. Upon the earth to-day there is no real faith in the whole teachings of Jesus. To safeguard itself the church has built ritual. This life with its secret questionings and unfathomable mysteries men cannot solve, and they are thus terrified into submission and fetichism. Alas, the short-sightedness and little faith of our kind!

Two years ago to-day I first spoke to you. Two years, two years—think of it! Do you remember how you stood in cassock that warm summer night? Your eyes gleamed in the dark light under the

elms, and we raised the fallen child. I saw your figure and poise of head and heard your rich, coaxing voice with such confusion of blood that I could with difficulty help the little one. I could but watch you and feel how ineffably beautiful you were.

"I did not choose thee, dearest,
It was Love that made the choice, not I."

others have, we ask so little—first, you

And now, in comparison with what whom I love to love me, and second, opportunity to work and earn our livelihood. Will it ever be? I look into great business houses, into schools and institutions, and even in the crowded street almost cry aloud, "Have you no room where two aching hearts may earn their daily sustenance?" But fate gives us neither gift. To keep stout-hearted is hard. If there were a third to whom we might speak!—from whom we might seek counsel!

But again when I asked you this morn-

ing to tell me one sweet thing in way of farewell after all the bitter slavery you had confessed, you looked in my eyes and smiled and said, "I love you." What do you think I then said to myself? "Is this aught that is good, honourable, or beautiful? Has it been in the past? Will it be in the future? Will you not always be sacrificed to the church? True love demands marriage. That is its sole fulfilment. Without marriage it is naught —or a sin and burden. He tells me he cannot marry me, and in the next breath looks at me with laughing eyes and kissing mouth, and whispers, 'I love you.' Which way shall I turn? Whither shall I run?"

A cave in Dakota would mean freedom. Or the bare, bold mountains of New Mexico, with their sandy cactus plains and atmosphere of electric clarity. But to New Mexico we must not go. There is the church, the hideous engine of your torture—of my torture—of our torture. There are the church's hideous

penitentes and its ignorant masses, its cactus flagellants and, above all, its absolutism, dogmatism, and satanic disdain.

Ὁ Ἔρως ὁ ἀποκρυπτόμενος

Love, love!
I cry as I look from my window
And see your form in the distance;
Dear love!
I moan as I wake in the night
And watch the long hours through;
Dear love,
In sun and rain weather, in harvest,
In sweet springing time ever dearer;
Love of my soul!
Is my heart's cry—God
Knows it, sweet—for you.

It comes in great waves. It shakes me, submerges and swallows me. It is much greater than I—as much greater as the sum of all life is greater than I. I cannot hope to express it except in loving you and becoming you forever. I am helpless and powerless before it. It is something outside of the human that is within you. I see it and feel it. So I love you—

every atom just as you are. Your hand, your touch, your flesh—they are not like others. They are the fabled lotus. I forget the world, old ways, old faiths, the past and future—when you are by.

"I love you, I love you," I hear you say. And I love you. If fine children are born to parents who love beyond all powers and denials, and have suffered long before at last they are given each other, how lovely of character and fair of body should our dear children be! I think of them and yearn over the poor unborn, and mourn my impenetrable desolation and the gift of motherhood—I yearn for a child who shall have your sweetness and beauty of soul and body.

Oh, dear love, you know not what you are to me:

Life, and
Health, and
Strength, and
Joy, and
Hope, and

all that is beautiful and sweet and pre-

cious in this world or in any possible hereafter. My heart aches with emptiness, and my whole soul cries out for you

XI.

For Weakness, in freedom, grows stronger than
Strength with a chain;
And Error, in freedom, will come to lamenting his
stain,
Till freely repenting he whiten his spirit again.

SIDNEY LANIER.

I KNOW what the verdict will be if you argue my case without my presence. Your church for many centuries tried and condemned without affording the accused either counsel or defence. It will be what it always has been. I shall be condemned.

Oh, if you were only an American! If you only understood the true American spirit of personal liberty you could not be enslaved nor believe your belief. It is not liberty but license? Why quarrel over a word? Call it license if you choose

—but in doing so you debase your Americanism. Without this "license" for which millions of your faithful voluntarily leave their native land, what would their condition be? If it were not for this "license," would they not—the Irish, the Italians—be over in Europe living the old starved life? We came here and made the liberty; you come here to enjoy its benefits and then tear it down. Our "license" allows your faith a new foothold, and your church the chance to prolong its breath. That you call freedom "license" is evidence that you do not understand its origin, its condition to-day, or its meaning at any time—nor the awful cost of founding it here.

With the undeveloped moral sense among your peoples, and resulting from your teachings, freedom degenerates into license. But our discipline—that which you call Protestant—is self-discipline, a strength which is possible only through the utmost freedom. You maintain the religious ceremonial of the thirteenth

century, lacking the faith and religious fire which then made it a force in the world. You have no genuine freedom. You do not know what it is. You are trained in no sense of self-direction. That is impossible with the confessional hampering you—the confessional of which the whole idea is hateful to liberty.

Can you not see the power of the church is immoral, in the confessional both in relation to penitent and confessor? The priest vows he will not reveal secrets told him in the confessional. Thus he unites with the criminal in keeping crime secret from the civic authorities. By his pledges to his supreme power he stands against the government of any and all countries where he may live. The power of the church is therefore a license to crime. And privately upon the penitent the effect is immoral. The penalty of wrong-doing is suffering, but the church intervenes and protects the perpetrator of the crime.

Tell the archbishop that you will marry, and that it is I whom you will

marry. Nowadays, in this country of liberty, he cannot starve you in a dungeon. At most he will say you are crazy, and possibly try to shut you up. That is a method they have, I notice. It is owing to what you call our "license" that they couldn't bury you in a subterranean cell.

Ay, ay. There you have it. You are always crying "I cannot," "I cannot." I am always saying "I will," "I will." You suffer an atrophy of the will, an apathy of the desires and volition.

You sit in judgment on God. The infinite and ineffable Good of the world runs to love as the sunbeams spring from the sun. God gave you your loving nature and affectionate impulses, the will and judgment of a complete and perfect man. You put before your God-given nature and the manliest impulses of our race—the primal gift of God to men—you put the dicta of the council of Trent, the decision of desiccated bishops, as I have said, who, to further their own ends, made for unborn generations such rules

that to obey them you must disobey God. In substance of your action you say, "O God! you have given me something wholly unessential to my churchliness, and in fact a snare to my heavenly progress. I shall use only a part of the nature you gave me. The council of Trent knew better than you, O Lord! That I shall follow and its laws obey in preference to yours."

In your life you tacitly accuse your God of an act that you would deem contemptible in a finite being—not only contemptible but felonious, for you make him an aider and abettor in entrapping you into crimes, from suffering for which you could not in your theology extricate yourself through all eternity. It is as I have repeatedly told you, the church detracts from the influence of her religious teachings by petty rules, canonical commands, and ceremonial exactness, the observance of which out-balances in the minds of its disciples real truth and strength and simplicity.

I don't for a minute think we are the only ones. Doubtless thousands have suffered as you and I are suffering, and for the same cause. But is that any reason why we should welter in pain apart? Let us break with the power at once. Pain enough there is in the world without adding to it by ignoble prostration of our sanity before a fantastic priesthood; in Browning's words—

> "All Peter's chains about his waist, his back
> Brave with the needlework of Noodledom."

In the face of such facts how helpless you are! I feel like carrying you as the peasant women about Weimar swing their children between arm and breast.

But my conception of God and my conception of mankind will not let me believe Jesus is, or was, God. You say you cannot help believing it. But even supposing he were, is that any reason why we should not be married? Your reasoning is—God was manifest in the flesh

nineteen hundred years ago, ergo I cannot marry you, although I believe our best lives would be lived in our union, and my own nature find its best expression. You dear thing! Jesus would not need to be God to have his heart yearn over you. Any simple man would bleed with pity at your pain and blindness. The spirit of Jesus would tell you you best do his bidding when you live in accord with the gentle, loving nature with which God endowed you.

You will leave your wheel of the ecclesiastical machine. You have promised so long. And you have loved me and never turned from your love. Nature made you beautiful. But that warp in your character which your doctrine and your education have implanted—it has made you at odds with the great moral laws of the world, untrue to the best instincts God has given you.

You say that in your life nothing has been better than your love for me. God

put it in your heart and you see that even the powers of your ecclesiasticism cannot take it out. You will be true to the best that is in you. You will not be a moral coward. If the scales would only fall from your eyes and you no longer be purblind to the real light! In thinking on your state my heart softens, and I pity you and blame the servitude. You never think of bending the world to yourself. You have the true Romish acquiescence. You are a son of your church, and love with you cannot be supreme. Ever the church and its blighting power first, is your teaching and law. And your church's law is hard—why, the hardness of other law is as liquid quicksilver to the steel of ecclesiastical law. It asserts its law, and proclaims "all rights reserved" over its peoples and their souls and bodies in this and all other worlds. Its priests even assert that they have the patent right to make God in the material form of the wafer, just as they proclaim their aristocratic rights in spiritual do-

minion. Like the bishop who ordered his tomb at St. Praxed's, they would

> "Hear the blessed mutter of the mass,
> And see God made and eaten all day long,
> And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
> Good, strong, thick, stupefying incense-smoke!"

So I have written. Now it is midnight, and I am looking at the patient stars and saying, "Where is my life, and what is he doing? Is he also thinking and longing?" Ah, there is the steady flame of your lamp far, far down the hillside and lighting the treetops. It is the old, attractive, engaging signal of Hero. But what was the foaming Hellespont to the doubt and Cimmerian gloom that lie between you and me, and the saltness of our tears?

XII.

It is by our ideas that we ennoble our passions or we debase them; they rise high or sink low according to the man's soul.

VAUVENARGUES.

DEAR heart, I have clasped you in my arms a thousand times since I parted from you last night, begging you to keep faith with me. Your depression consumes me. My heart has ached for you ever since—ached anew, I should say, for the pain is there all the time. We must have the courage of our faith—that we love each other and God gave us the love. And it seems to me the only way we can keep and show the courage is to hope and work steadily for the final joy —our union.

"It is so long a time, dear, already"—

your words have rung in my ears and I know how faint-hearted I grow when I stop to count the awful weeks and months and, alas! years, and all the deadly pain they have held for both of us. Do not think I forget what has passed and what it has cost us. Not only during those years, but for the future, it reduced our strength—nay, it has even shortened our lives. But for myself I count not loss, if at last I may rest in your unceasing love and constant presence through the years that remain. I do not ask you to do violence to your religious bias. If I were to, I should thereafter be the thrall of fears and misgivings that all was not well with you even if you seemed happy and contented. I can only wait for God to send some light or relief in some way.

It is a hideous light in which you present your religion. No wonder men of independent spirit have come to hate its enslaving rule. The beauty and loveliness of abnegation that were

at the foundation of its force are lost in dogmatic arrogance.

Power always corrupts when men possess it in unlimited measure. It has done this in your church. Power is the source of its absolute, autocratic spirit. The church existed in a simple, persuasive way until, in the turmoil of the breaking up of kingdoms, and in the darkness of an unlettered period, its alertness and ambition put out each a hand and gained domination. Upon that domination its present rules were founded. Its power in the control of a few astute politicians, they proclaimed their possession of heaven and earth—this life and the next—and placed their foot on the neck of all the mankind they knew, or could reach. It became a machine which could say, "This thou shalt do, and that thou shalt not," even when *thou shalt not* sundered the sweetest and ennoblingest love of all the world.

Can you let yourself remain the creature of so worldly a manipulation? I

do not say you have not Christianity. But Christ's teachings are so covered up and concealed by a bark of demeaning dogmas, laws and genuflexions that the original pith is lost and forgotten. In any question, what is it that determines your action? Is it the simple teachings of Jesus? Is it not rather what the councils and Roman courts have declared? You set the church in the place of Christ and the teachings of your theologians in the stead of the simple dicta of the unworldly Galilean.

Do not forget, oh beloved, that here on this Tuesday morning, at a quarter before ten, my arms—my arms?—yea, my whole body is aching to be clasped in your embrace, to hear your voice name me, to feel the balm upon my soul that your presence never fails to bring. And it may be a week before I see you for a brief half hour. Oh, God, if I were stronger! Then might

there be some chance of having you the sooner.

If opportunity should offer for me to speak to a friend, and tell him of this great and beautiful enigma in our lives, and how a solution might be arrived at, am I at liberty to do so? That is, have I permission to say what you said the other day about opportunity for bread-winning and the like? Do not fear evil from it. Trust to my discretion. But I do not like to speak of you—you are too sacred a subject—and especially I do not like to speak of our most dear wishes, unless your consent unites with me in the speaking.

There are various paths:

You to remain in the church—

1. Ask that you be freed from vows.
2. Marriage without permission.
3. Ask the archbishop to ask permission.
4. Drift and wait.
5. Separate forever.

You to leave the church—

Ministries

1. Episcopal { In which you could have substantially a similar faith to your present.

2. Radical Unitarian {
1. Worker in public philanthropies.
2. Preacher.
3. Lawyer, or some other secular employment

You will not turn aside from this appeal my friend has drawn up. Let us go to the archbishop or cardinal. The cry rises within me—"It is not impossible." Certum est, quia impossibile est, says Tertullian. I believe it can be done because you say it is impossible. If you were not so full of fear, so timid of tentative effort!

It is my last desperate cry for life. Insomnia eats my mind and body and I go about a shadow. Every impulse the powers about you heartlessly push back upon me, and days are when I feel I am dying. It is now nearly three years since

we met. What have we not suffered and I not learned?

I have been asked to address you, and to apply advisedly to you because you seem the most eminent and outspoken champion of the liberals of your church in this country. My appeal, or reference, is wholly a professional one, and comes from one of my clients who is a woman of native ability learning, and refined life. She is not a Catholic. Another whose wishes she also represents in this matter, but who perforce makes no personal appeal at this moment, is a priest of your faith. He is esteemed among men whose names are familiar to you for his unaffected piety and modesty, and self-sacrificing beauty of life and character.

Between this man and woman a feeling of great strength and unity has grown. They have repeatedly endeavoured to set it aside, and after months of pain and misery resolved not to see or write to each other. Just as often some event has intervened and broken their purpose. At last she has won the priest to consent to her appeal to you. In short, she asks your intervention at the Vatican that the priest be relieved of his vows. Direct advice touching him I will send after I have heard

your answer. Our presentations would have been made directly to the Vatican, and not to your embarrassment, if certain of her friends of influence in Italy had not lately died.

It may be needless—I trust you will not deem it gratuitous—for me to point out that the granting of my client's request—that the priest be relieved of his vows—would exert most beneficent influences from a Catholic point of view—for one who had been a priest would still hold the faith living in a coterie where there is no Catholic expression, and would undoubtedly further the institution more than if continuing his present parochial duties.

That you may comprehend the spirit with which you have to deal, let me say that in conversation with my client, when I suggested, "If we should not be able—"

Before I could finish she interrupted me, "You know Richelieu's epigram, 'There's no such word as fail.'"

"But if," I persisted.

"There is no if in the case," she answered. "If? If they answer negatively and there is no chance at Rome, then I shall show him [the priest] the history of celibacy in the church and the many times priests have been relieved of vows since

celibacy became the rule. I shall persuade him to withdrawal from the church, or at least to secret marriage. Neither he nor I would like a secret marriage; we hate any act that is covert and not in the sight of all men. But—I shall marry him. After my death, or his, the relation would of course become known. It would not redound to the rules to which he is subject. On the other hand I should be pained to have him lay down his religious forms while he has any apparent faith in them. I have entire knowledge that the mass of his co-religionists would abuse him with a ready tongue. And, so long as he thinks the forms essential, I should like to have him keep to them. But I repeat to you what I said to him, 'There's no such word at fail.' Priests' vows have in the past been set aside by various popes again and again—for money or for policy. On the 12th of May, 1801, Pius VII wrote, 'As for the absolution of the married priests . . . 'we shall see to it by giving the necessary powers in order that they may be absolved according to the rules and to ecclesiastical discipline.' Money I cannot just now offer, But policy on the part of the church should grant the request. It is all a case of measuring its own advantages. Its secular eye is far-seeing enough to discover that such a concession would

be advantageous. In the last century Pius IX emphasized anew the idea of celibacy. What else could he with the flowers of the amours of a cardinal in his presence—even if the cardinal were not a priest? Whatever we take in hand must be in entire secrecy. There must be no trumpeting."

I have repeated my client's words in order that you may thoroughly comprehend her spirit—as I said above. In the event of affirmative action a simple announcement of release from vows would be all it is essential to say to the world.

Marriage with retention of priesthood would be still more satisfactory to my client. But this "privilege" has not been granted so often or so lately as that I have indicated. If such a suggestion strikes you as extraordinary or absurd, kindly understand it is not to one who views the case with unecclesiastical eyes, and who sees that such concessions must come if your church continues upon American soil.

My client's character is so well known to me that I can assure you no interference, discomfort, or disaster would result if she were placed in so singular a position. Indeed, under such conditions she would be self-poised, and a strong aider and worker in charitable, humane, and educational undertakings. Her sympathies and abilities are

already enlisted on the side of the ignorant and oppressed. I know she has weighed the possibilities of carrying on parochial classes for teaching women elements of healthful cooking, sewing, cleanliness, and care of the body. And I know of one instance where she set forth to two or three priests the need of higher education among Catholic women and the advantages that would accrue to the church if such plans as she outlined were adopted and realised.

I have entered into these minutiæ in endeavour to present my client and save her from misconception; in order that you may see she is not an ordinary woman to be judged by ordinary standards. To mention such facts as I have may make her, I fear, seem Quixotic—while she is balanced, sensible, and practical. But she is an American of the old stock—Acatholica according to your distinctions—and has been brought up in the freedom and liberality that inform the best people of our country, and also with the faith that there are no difficulties which justice, truth, and good purpose may not overcome. She has already been identified with works of our neophilanthropy.

I have had no direct communication with the priest upon this question. I know, however, that

the facts are exactly as I state them. I can assure you of his most vital interest in what I have set forth and of his sincerity in endeavour to do right in the struggle between the past, and its promises given in the inexperience and ignorance of life, and the present and future which contain his heart-felt desires.

If, in your opinion and with your support, I should be warranted in making a formal application, I will journey to you to consult with you, or I will advise under the seal of secrecy with a representative whom you may name. A plea for release from priesthood vows might be based upon the ground of transference to another and broader field of labour, for that is what this marriage—the marriage regularly accredited by the church—would mean, whether the priest remains in his priesthood or not.

I realise the importance of the question which this letter may suggest to you. I shall be obliged for any advice that will help to such solution as my client's friends would wish. I await your answer with solicitude, and I remain, dear and venerable sir,

Very truly yours,

XIII.

With voices of men made lowly,
  Made empty of song,
O Lord God most holy,
  O God most strong,
We reach out hands to reach thee
  Ere the wine-press be trod;
We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee,
  O Lord our God.

A. C. SWINBURNE.

TO-NIGHT the moon hangs full in the heavens. What a soft suggestiveness of slow walking with you under leafy trees! On such nights as this, if we were married, I should pull aside the curtain to see you as you lay asleep—to feast my eyes on your calm lids, not trusting to any sense of touch or sound of your uninterrupted breathing. And then when the long waking hours were come, what would

I not say to you and you to me?—laying plans for the future, telling the sadness and joy of the past, giving each other strength and love and courage for whatever hardship life might unfold.

To be with you, to think with you, feel with you, lose myself in you! I would lay aside my past life, forget and not consider it, if I could once know that you were wholly mine and I wholly yours—that no force, no power, no authority stood between us. So God and nature designed, not the unnatural, forced, extravagant, fantastic immolation which you now serve, and, serving, pine and suffer.

You are like a man who at the tenderest age has been put in an iron contrivance for keeping straight a body perfect from the hand of nature. Having once learned to walk with the machine, he cannot stand or walk without it. It is clasped about him while he grows even to man's stature. He leans upon it and accommodates his growth to it, repressing instinctive outputs here and there, until, if

you loose it or take out one iron or clamp, he falls helpless. He stands not because he is a man endowed with the God-given strength of a long line of ancestors sinewy with the divine energy of upward-struggling, but because the machine, moulded and fitted together by the hands of artisans clever at their work, holds him with its steel network. He even distrusts his own strength and begs you not to take away his prop. He fears the liberty of moving about as God meant all creatures to do. His native weakness he is constantly told about until he believes God-given strength is a delusion and sin, and at last he cannot walk or stand in pure sunshine unless the horrible mechanism and hideous gearings are clamped about his flesh. He is as men who have been long imprisoned in a dungeon, who dread liberty and light when at last they are granted, and shudder and fear and cling to their narrow darkness rather than to the beauty and breadth of God's fair world in sunlight and starlight.

No "heretic" tried by the church without defence has ever escaped condemnation. The result of the presentation of our case was foregone. But that you will never kiss me again, that you will never again bury your face in my neck, upon "the whiteness there" as you say, and cry "I want you, oh, I want you!" But you shall, again and again.

Do not say you have been false to God. To be true to the best in you is to be true to God. But you will surely be false, if you do as you say. You have been true to your sweet human nature, and true to your manly heart, and so true to God. You have been true to the loving divinity of human nature which has been growing all these millions of years in which men and women have been growing—which was long before the old Inquisition was born of the distorted fanaticism which had hatred for sire and superstition for dam. You have been true to the human love which will exist long after the church is dead and men shall be pointing a fin-

ger at its lasting inquisitorial dominion and turn away shuddering that such corruption ever enslaved one single human soul.

My head is full of you. I cannot keep it quiet. Perhaps if I write I may stop the ache. And it will not hurt you. Ever since yesterday it has throbbed. What you said has pulsed within just as the screw of a steamer turns and throbs and will not let the vessel stop. Somehow the matter always comes for us to speak about when I am weakest and most bested. Let us not speak as yesterday until I have strength to stand—to stand as long as it takes you to speak the farewell. And I spoke quickly. That has troubled me. But I was angry—as I have seen a panther shut in a cage and prodded by hard-hearted keepers. Forget what I said. If I could see you just a moment to hear that sweet voice say you forgive!

Do not be afraid. Act out what your heart tells you is right, and if all the

world blames you my arms shall shelter you in love always. Come, come—

"So let us melt and make no noise,
No tear-floods nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
To tell the laity our love."

I shall send this letter:

My dear Sir:

The question has lately been asked me, "How —under what conditions—would the Unitarians receive a Roman Catholic priest to their membership and possibly to their ministry?" In fact, I have not only been asked the question, but circumstances have put it to me. While listening to your sermon last Sunday, I thought that you might be willing to help me to an answer—since from the point of view of liberal Unitarianism the progress and uplifting of a human soul are involved.

I trust I am not trenching too much upon your patience and forbearance in making the request. It is a matter I could not bring to any Unitarian I know, and one, moreover, about which I could most easily speak with a stranger.

If you should prefer, before giving definite an-

swer, to know more than I can write, and if you should also choose to tell me by word of mouth rather than by writing, I will see you at your consulting room at your most convenient hour. Whichever way you choose; or if you do not care to answer the question at all, may I beg the utmost prudence and circumspection in the matter? Any mention, or publication of such a change as imminent, might irremediably wound the sensitive nature of the possible convert, turn him with extremes of penance to the old forms, and lose whatever of liberal outlook has been gained. I am,

Very truly yours,
KATHERINE PESHCONET.

DEAR MADAM:

There is a hospitable provision for receiving into the Unitarian body worthy ministers from other churches. Rev. Dr.—— is chairman of a "Committee of Fellowship," and any such applicant as you describe would be sure of kindly consideration. Of course he should be able to show an honourable record, and satisfactory testimonials from the church he leaves, though the Roman Catholics could not be expected to send him away with benediction.

I have no clear occasion to say more, perhaps;

but the kindly confidence expressed in your letter encourages me to add a caution.

There seems to be something in the education, training, and habits of thought and life of a Romish priest which is peculiarly *disqualifying* for the ministry of our Protestant and Free Churches. Accustomed to take everything upon authority and to work under direction of a superior, he is apt to show some serious weaknesses when thrown upon his own resources; and I think a majority of such converts break down morally after doing some mischief in our parishes. Certainly, if a priest gets his eyes open to the false pretension of his church he must withdraw or do worse; but he must not take it for granted that his priestly training will fit him for a spiritual ministry in a Protestant communion; for, as a rule, it has *unfitted* him. Episcopacy as a working method might more nearly suit him; but for our work he should lay new foundations by some years of study and related work.

Knowing nothing at all of the case to which your letter refers, I may be wasting my solicitude; but I have written in the light of some sorrowful *experiences*. If you can make any good use of me, for consultation or otherwise, I shall be found

Your willing fellow-servant,

My dear Sir:

Will you be good enough to inform me, with what, if any, probation, a Roman Catholic priest, born and bred a Roman Catholic, of unimpeachable character, success in his ministrations and unusual popularity in his own and other parishes —a gentle, sensitive, sympathetic, reverential nature, I should say, and withal a strong one— would be received into the ministry of the Episcopal Church, either the ritualistic or broad church branch, as he might elect?

I ask this for the sake of another. May I beg the utmost prudence in its consideration, and as early an answer as you can conveniently give.

I am

Yours very truly,

Katherine Peshconet.

And no answer came.

XIV.

Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost.

EMERSON.

I AWOKE calmly in the morning and was thankful that you had taken it in your own hands and said it could not be. I see the diversity in our lives—not only in the present, but in what has been. We submit to necessity. There is no overcoming the fate consequent upon what has been. You have behind you all the legends of the Irish immigrant. To me you are as well-born as any man. But the imperative necessity of environment since your birth! That is the part I cannot overcome with all strength and all patience and all love.

And yet when I see you ready to drop out of my life, I am frozen with terror and cry, "Life of my life, stay with me, come what may. Oh, do not fear to follow your heart. They cannot use irons to burn or mangle the dear flesh in these days. Do not fear. Laws would intervene—even if they tried imprisonment on the plea of insanity."

It is not the physical torture you fear but the loss of mental support, the church your crutch, and the anger, vituperation, and uncharity of your co-religionists. They could not destroy your soul and I would protect your body. It makes a coward of you—you who by birthright are courageous. You should not be a Catholic priest. You should be a free man.

But I see more and more clearly that we could not have a happy married life, if it were entered upon with any violation of your spiritual being. And the thought hardens and maddens me. For it means that I cannot have you at all.

And I want you, oh, dearest heart, I long for you constantly and yearn over you with tenderest devotion.

Your own sufferings should teach you the iniquity that is under your ecclesiastical rule. It is not right for you to uphold it without murmur, and thus entail, or help to entail upon others, the possibility and probability of like suffering. It is right for you to speak out against it, and save those who come after you from like awful struggle with temptation to break the church's laws and live the large life of a free and rational man.

"And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,
And binding with briers my joys and desires."

The fault—it was not a fault but a virtue—lay in my reaching out and endeavouring to bring you by the strength of love into a new and larger life, to give you new scenes, new feelings, new thoughts, new vigour, and new heart.

Dear love, I strove to do right—what, I still think, was the only conscientious

course I could have followed. Your life is so narrow, so inferior to your nature, that it strikes me with pain every time I turn to its meretriciousness. Personalities are just as frequent in the narrowed sphere of your priesthood as in our greater life, and from what you have told me I see the resentments, jealousies, vindictiveness, retaliations, fears and ambitions are as much pettier as the sphere is smaller. And you like it, this narrow life? —and love to be clothed in a little brief authority?—and for it will desert me? You are used to homage and would miss it. But from whom does it come? Does their ignorance not melt your heart?

Most pitiable are you in my eyes. That which belittles our beautiful human nature—the nature entirely beautiful in you—is always pitiable. But that which renders abortive the sweetest and deepest and truest instincts of every soul, that I cannot help negating with all my strength. If you had not so crass and material ideas of God! Catholicism is

materialism. It cannot even have a spiritual God.

As I lie awake in the night, or as I go about in the open, or sit reading or writing, your lonely figure comes before me. Its sweet sad eyes shine out in space, and the mouth quivers in sorrow and pain. No more do you seem to stand before my chair, and I pull you to me and listen to the heart-beats.

Do you forget those high-hearted months three years ago when our love was still an unexplained newness, how we hoped and took each other by the hand, and said, "It shall be"—do you remember, beloved? How strong and courageous we tried to be! How I dreamed of our future life as I walked through streets, and was conscious only of the flood of love in which I floated, and of hope and the high courage which takes life in hand.

Now I walk over the same ways with an unceasing, dumb ache and longing, for the love that has been pouring

from my being towards you, you have built a bar against. It is as if you had dammed a clear mountain stream along which violets and white anemones and flowering innocents and all sweet things grow, and the waters are shut back on themselves and confusedly mingle and are disturbed and drown the native beauty that surrounds them—the growth of tree and grass and flower. Every fountain having its waters near from a thousand delicate channels becomes unclear also. And that which God had meant for a beauty and source of life to every seed of the mountain and plain below becomes its greatest defacer, something deadly and malevolent. So it is with the stream of my love to you.

I lie and think of you and our fallen hopes through the long night hours, and I am only conscious that *you are*. And my watch ticks beside me and my cheeks are wet.

"Oh! dearest love, sweet home of all my fears,
And hopes and joys and parting miseries."

You will come and see me. I will not touch you—not even your hand. We can sit and talk of your hopes and ambitions and our common friendships—is this not so? I shall never again ask you "to give up your faith" as you phrased it this morning, but simply pity your slavery and pray God I may live to see the end of it. I shall not even tease you to tell me where that toe of the trinity is which your church verified and exhibited to its faithful some three hundred years agone—and whether it is mortal or immortal, albeit I should like to know. But come, let me see you and help you. Let us quicken the world and make all monstrous pretence and lie impossible. No one of your friends or relations knows your mind, your nature, your soul, as I.

You told me this morning I did not look well. Ye gods! Can you not have mercy? Does the butcher, after he has summoned his strength, wakened his muscle, and dealt his mortal blow, say that to his victim?

How has it been? When with you I forgot the days freighted with anxious cares, the tossing, wearying sleep, heart-ache, the pang of fear that at the crucial moment the apparition of churchly power might cloud your judgment. I knew only the sense of rest and peacefulness the pressure of your hand imparted. I looked at the calm peace of your face and knew the world had for me nothing else of value. I struggled with expression of love. When I touched you I touched infinity. You were the visible presence of God.

Do not say I asked you to give up your religion. Not your religion; but the polity of life which your church attaches to its religion and makes so important that the spirit of the religion is lost in it. But never again shall I ask it. Do not fear. Its hideousness has revolted me. I am not a Protestant. I do not protest. I merely say your church is a tremendous lie and pretence. At what should I protest? I protest against all lies.

It is a net, moreover, which has you in its meshes. The net is woven with the warp of a system of polity—your slavery, espionage over you, superstition, deceit—and a woof of the mild and simple religion taught nineteen hundred years ago in Galilee. It has been snaring so long — the net — that it is well-nigh threadbare in places; in fact, the warp only is seen. "We are in an age of transition," said one of your archbishops the other day to some of his school teachers, "and we must alter our ways of doing things." Precisely. Science and the industry of that part of the world that is not Catholic has got so far beyond the Catholic that "you must alter your ways of doing things" in order to save yourselves at all.

This in some way brings to mind the time you laughingly told me I was a heathen not to cross myself before I sat down to dine—not to ask God to bless the food of which I was about to partake. Now I think it impious thus familiarly

to endeavour to bring God to myself. If I partake according to a healthful appetite, and with careful mastication, of wholesome, digestible food, I do not need to mutter a prayer and beseech God to be with me. God is with me, for I am keeping, not breaking, God's laws. But if I break the laws and eat gluttonously, or too hastily, or of improper food, or in any other way unlawfully, still I think it impious to invoke God. For I should be begging God to be a partner in my wrong-doing and to act at variance with laws of nature—which God never does. I do not believe in "grace" at the beginning of meat, but a true sense of grace all through meat and in every act of consciousness.

Now I understand how women love men and men love women after the one has committed some crime. I love you still unspeakably although I see you do what is unjust and dishonourable and unmanly. It is worth while giving up

this world—and the next, too, if so you count it—for such love as I have for you. You cannot know how it would enwrap you, and transfigure and glorify you. The trouble of it all would be that I should be so prostrate before the shrine of our united lives that I should become forgetful of the step, voice, and eye of the world, its cares, needs, and perplexities, and fable to myself heaven. You have no conception of my love. It moves within me as an immense force under whose power I am helpless. It exults through my body and tingles the extreme arteries. What is it? I only know it is the force driving me relentlessly to your arms. If they are closed God knows whither I shall turn. It would be kinder to take me blindfold to the remotest steppe of Siberia, and tell me I should never have food or warmth till I found my way to the cities of men.

Oh, to feel the passage of your arm about me, its cool, strong touch and the sweet sense of yielding to you. To give

myself wholly to you! You speak of your place of worship—do you know where my divine services would be? In our house every hour of the day. And my sanctuary? Our room within the house —the abode of our selflessness.

The godliest giving and the godliest life, I say it again. I can think of nothing purer, sweeter, fairer than to love you all my life, to lose all sense of self in the fire of our love, to be merged, my soul in your soul, my body in your body—ay, the old ecclesiastical "one flesh"—and to know nothing, to be conscious of nothing but you. Desire for such annihilation swells within me. Flame runs through my veins. The outer world is dead. I am conscious only of you and the loving God that made you. What has value? Naught but your love and tenderness. Can the world offer anything holier or more beautiful?

Behind this great and worshipful belief must be the Primal Life of the universe—that life which is back of the beginning

of our earth, and back of the whole mysterious development and progress of our hunan race. It drives us on. It impels us to self-sacrifice. It puts in our hearts prayerful desire that *good* only shall survive, and that because of our love posterity may do more nobly, live more nobly.

I long for my own, and wonder if motherhood, which deepens and sanctifies the flimsiest life, will ever ennoble mine.

XV.

I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

DEAR heart, this agony is killing me, and it does not help to the end for which they are inflicting it. I love you just as ever. I wonder that I do. But that I do is true. Oh, my precious one, I cannot give you up. You are my life, health, strength, my only joy. My eyes burn like balls of fire. The pain in my body it so great through the long hours of sleeplessness. But still I love you, and long and perish for you. Do you wish that I should die? You are killing me. Such aching misery is forerunner of the end.

Anything which does violence to gener-

ous natural impulses is wrong and must ultimately become the ruin it deserves. Oh, if you could believe otherwise!—that God and nature are not inimical, but that nature and right-doing are the most beautiful expression of God. Our love then becomes the divine thing God meant it, and not a secret, covert thing. Our nature is but an expression of the all-pervading being, and not an evil to be cast aside. Throw the absurd fable of "the fall" and Adam in the ash-pit of all dead superstitions and turn your face to the light. Turn, turn, don't you see it is God and Love beckoning you? There is noble work here on this side, much greater than what you are doing. That which you have holds your people back with factitious comforts. That which you might do under a new covenant would be nobler and loftier in itself, would be subject to but one law—the law of God—and aim at but one expression —God's simplest daily utterances among men.

Do not desert me. Come back to love and life with me. Oh, it is so hideous, your endeavour to turn from me. It makes me into iron; and then to fire. I want to fly to you, and clasp you about the neck, and cover you with kisses, and sob away the pain on your shoulder. Do not say as you have tried to say. Let there be hope for the future. Let me think that if I cannot have you now, the time may come—perhaps within a year. We shall both be happy then. You will be happy. It is a sickly fancy that you will not. Oh, the joy and blessedness of being with you, a part of you, thinking what you think, feeling what you feel, rising and lying down and walking the roadside with you. Dear God, will that time ever come? To be able to pass my hand at will over your cheek, to follow the firm bend of the chin, to stroke the waving hair that clings with such characteristic tenacity to that precious head! But—above all, to know that your soul and my soul were blended in one eternal

union and that no power could separate us! The thought intoxicates me. And it must be. Let us will that it shall be. Then it will come.

Just now I am exhausted, for I grew over-weary yesterday. But my love and devotion to you never swerve, however ill I am. When I am sickest and weakest I feel most keenly of all that our separation and isolation are intolerable. Your sweet comfortings would be ineffably tender then. But are you never going to write except when I beg for a letter? I am starving. I should like to devour you. And when, when are you coming? I looked for a word from you to-day, and even for yourself in the close of the day. Oh, if I could see you to touch you, kiss you and tell you there is nothing so God-like in your life as our love.

Can you guess what I send you through this misty air and under these leaden clouds? Far they go leaping over hills and marshlands. Much of the nature of

the rays of a star, of the sweetness of the honey-bee harvest, of the wind of dawn, of the purity of the souls of our unborn children. They are white like lilies and as tender as dreams of our life together. I see them rest upon your lips and the lines about the mouth soften, and the sad look takes flight, and the love-light grows in your eyes, and I look upon you with the cry "Dearest and sweetest of all human kind."

It is such an awful giving up. Does it not seem great in your eyes? It prostrates me utterly. I cry out, "Is it necessary? May he not wait? Perhaps after a while he will think differently and see the dishonour of what he now thinks is right. Perhaps if he waits life will take on broader aspects, and he will believe that to injure a human being who loves us is worse than breaking with superstition."

What have I done to cause it, or deserve it? I have been too fond of you, too clinging, too ready to tell in word

and action how infinitely precious you are to me?—or *endeavour* to tell, for no words can tell. Perhaps I have wearied you and disgusted you with iteration and outcrying and adoration. You sit near me and tell of your interests, of what your people and friends say, and I listen and watch your figure and motion and the soul-light play upon your face, thinking how beautiful it is to have you near me, and how well I know every passing expression of your countenance and every sweet intonation. That is worship and adoration beyond what your penetralia ever house.

But all the time an emptiness is gnawing my heart and I am saying to myself, "Poor fool, poor fool, why will you look and hope further? You are a miserable devotee of one who will never heed your oblation, and in whose building for the future you may look in vain for the scantiest recognition."

It is said men weary of excessive love in women. "If women could be fair and

yet not fond." Perhaps I have tired you. There can be no end to my love. It is a fire I cannot put out.

God bless you for the sweet letter you wrote Wednesday. The first word not hard and bitter for so long. I felt when I read it—what I used to feel—that you truly love me. And I have read it many times since Friday morning brought it. You cannot fancy how I miss the little kisses * * * those at the end of your letters, and the "As ever." Those little things were so dear, and helped to fill the longings of my heart. And they were so innocent, my life—don't you see?—they were so innocent! That must indeed be a black-souled and wicked thing which says they are wrong. They are like a handclasp in friendship; they satisfy and calm the mind. Love cannot live without them even in your warm heart.

Shall I tell you of what I have thought this week? I think I should have gone mad if I could not have spoken—to paper

at least: The saddest of your letter is this sentence, "It is useless for me to hope or desire." Dear heart, how can you submit to have your manhood, your liberty, your humanity taken from you? What are you if you cannot hope or desire? *To hope* and *to desire* are the greatest motor forces of our race, that by which mankind has risen, has evolved, has moved along the line of advancement. Your sentence has been before my eyes ever since I read it. It rings constantly in my ears. I can think of nothing more pathetic or heart-rending. It would be awful to hear it from a malefactor, or from a poor eunuch, or from a shaven monk of the twelfth century. But to hear it from you, a firm, strong man born and reared in the latter part of the nineteenth century, in a country where personal liberty and the right and duty of private judgment have been constant watchwords, and where hundreds of thousands of men have laid down their lives that such ideas might be preserved—it tears me asunder.

You are so unconscious of the spirit of the air which you breathe, and of the great Puritan thought which informs the laws under which you live.

We should all be steeped in barbarism, living in caves, gnawing raw flesh from bones, asserting our authority by the swing of a club (just as your spiritual authority swings its club of anathema over your head), if it were not for the inherent right of human beings *to hope* and *to desire* and to act out mental state in the physical world. This is the secret of growth, of cleanness, of morality. Your restless longing and striving, under your enforced mental inaction, mean that your soul is reaching out for higher and better experiences. It is wrong to curb the motion.

Why should I not say your church is a mass of superstition and barbarous tradition? Then I will change the figure. It is rather a palsied body, tottering with senility, moribund with vitiated blood. None but the children of its household

honour it, and but few of them. They see its corruption and its dislocated skeleton. Under its spangled vestments they know it is hard, hideous, and cruel, and children fear to look in its face because of the deeds of its prime. I hate it. I hate it. I hate it. It deprives me of hope. I hate it, I say. It enslaves all human beings upon whom it clasps its tentacles. It takes from me the one I love and condemns me to a loveless, lonely life—when I would know a husband's caresses and the pressure of a son at nurse. I hate it. My health of body and mind lay in you—every happiness my soul longed for. I hate its outrageous authority. I hate it with fierce will and I pray God punish it by destruction before another woman suffers as I through its unpitying mechanism. God, God of liberty in human life, take venegance for the wrong it does me and every woman in my person!

Don't tell me "it is wiser in the end." Wiser in the end to live in loneliness and

pain?—to go in and out countless days loveless and forlorn?—no one caring and in such utter heart-breaking pain that one can answer no human pity?—to have one's nature warped by misery and hardened by despair and love held a cheap thing and thrust back upon itself? Do not say you have been false to God. You are false to God when you do as your church tells you. You have been true to your sweet human nature, true to your manly instincts, and hence true to the great original Love back of your nature and back of us all. I want to write more, and yet more. But I must rest. And you? Rest, and do not suffer. Rest, and do not think of me. Yes, think of me often—all the time. There is much I would say. I love you devotedly.

XVI.

"*Good action* has created the life of the world, and in so doing has personified itself as humanity; so we call it 'the mother of life and of man.' And we have defined good action to be that which makes an organism more organic. . . .

"The character of an organic action, then, is freedom—that is to say, *action from within.* The action which has its intermediate antecedents within the organism has a tendency, in so far as it alters the organism, to make it more organic, to raise it in the scale. The action which is determined by foreign causes is one in regard to which the organism acts as if inorganic, and in so far as the action tends to alter it, it tends also to lower it in the scale."

W. K. Clifford.

To-day I have been thinking of our old way of talking of your interests, and I have been wondering why is not the building of character more emphasised by your church—strength in principles,

veracity, clean honour. You agree with me that character ranks in importance beyond all else. But the very confessional upon which you put such emphasis, disintegrates and hinders such growth. It weakens by taking away responsibility for one's acts. It endeavours to do away with the eternal law that the breaking of the moral law is visited with penalties and pains just as the breaking of the laws of physical nature has its inevitable consequence. The "what sins ye forgive these shall be forgiven" of the archbishop at the consecration of priests is a travesty. And its practice results in weak and dependent characters. Some minds recognize this even in your church. Frassinnetti writes, "Those persons—invariably women—who would wish to go to confession every day are generally ninnies, and the more frequently they confess the more silly do they become"—an unconscious estimate of the elevating grace supposed to lie in the sacrament.

Ah, if your sense of moral responsi-

bility were greater—were as great as that of the average non-Catholic, if I must say it. But you were bred in that weakness which the confessional inculcates, and you have all the strengthlessness that inheres from it. Irresponsibility for acts is one of these.

The higher law of God, one of the great primary moral laws, you break in order to obey a minor ephemeral law of the church in its government—the very point I have made against your faith, that it exalts that which is passing, transient, puny, over that which is eternal, which will last as long as men last. You do not distinguish between a command of the church—sometimes the residuum of the desiccation and dyspepsia of a body of men in foregone centuries—and the immutable moral laws that have ruled all men and all sects. The command is of greater importance to your mind than the law. It humbles me to think I can be sacrificed to such observance.

And why set aside all the facts and experiences of life in religious considerations? Why not use them as criteria in matters of theology, as well as in other occasions of life? You should have had my father to teach you to ask "*Is it so?*" —no matter what your authority. You can reason as well as the next man. Does your reason justify such conclusions? That this man says this, or that man says that, is of little importance to me in thinking out my own belief—merely humanly interesting to see what others have thought out. I could not accept your faith because it is disproved by all the facts and experiences of my own life, and by the history of the human race. When you would carry converts into Romanism by an emotional tide, that is justifiable in church contention. But when you endeavour to lead them by the great logic of the world, the matter is laughable.

Yes, with your premises your conclusions follow logically enough. You as-

sume a bad-tempered man up in the sky —a fancy of men when they thought the earth was flat—who is revengeful and bloodthirsty and who has you in his grip. And you must reason that this God's wickedness has made a hell. To a broader life of present-day conceptions you prefer going each day to your church and stiffening the credulity of ignorant and decrepit brains by practice of your hocus-pocus. The same time spent in exposition of modern conceptions of duty, of truth, of humanity—how much greater the results! And with the same brains for subjects, too. Your slavery is one the government ought to interfere with. If a body of young men without knowledge or experience of what it meant were annually selling themselves and entering a bondage which reason, all human truth and modern science proved most shameful—don't you think the laws would be justified in interfering?

God is vague, indefinite, and far-away in all but the Catholic religion? But is

not God vague and far away in your actual experiences in life? Do you ever see the eternal power, or feel by direct material sense of touch? Can you in any reason see its workings except in great and general ways? To believe in a good, all-directing power, which shows itself in stern, unvarying law and in vast secular movements, is not that faith beside which your puny belief, and gross materialism of the Host, grows pale, oh, you of little faith? Are not life's revelations of God just as much and no more diffuse and vague? Are we justified in saying more from all that mankind has experienced or discovered throughout all time, and over all the world?—which will stand all tests?

They have told you tremendous stories of the power and wrath of their God. They have frightened you as nurses terrify children with fanciful hobgoblins who will destroy them if they do not obey. This your superiors have done. You are their children. Their hobgoblin

is a vindictive God. Possibly they believe the tale themselves. Probably not. Sometimes they may mention a God of love, but do they not act as if they were the privy council of a tyrant—as cruel and bloodthirsty as ever defiled this fair earth? The great truths upon which the church was founded have been lost sight of in a mass of rules, regulations, and enactments which have greater weight with the multitude, and indeed with the esoteric priesthood itself, than the fundamental moral precepts. You should read Spencer on theological bias.

But what of God?—you repeat. I do not know. To speak properly thereof is beyond speech. A certain inscrutable power is always revealing itself in life. Your nature perceives it. Let us ask nothing more. Let us go on our way clasping each other's hands and with bowed heads and self-abnegation in our soul. That is all. For ourselves no care. Let us think of others and do our duty. We never trust so profoundly as

when we forget ourselves. Let us go forward without hope, or repining, or any personal exaction. That is the highest faith.

You once told me with a smile that you had exorcists in your church—men who drive out evil spirits by incantations—and you added that they do not do that thing nowadays. But that priests do not use their exorcising formulas is merely one of the concessions the church has been forced to make to the spirit of our time—which it has been ridiculed into making. Other concessions will also be wrung from its divinity. Your brethren used to exorcise the devil from goats and such like. We still have records telling of such illuminated proceedings.

But why, if the church has all elements of righteousness, does it not correct the perceptions to truth and quicken the moral sense of the mass of Catholics? They have been in its keeping these hundreds of years—indeed they are the fruits

of its teachings. And yet look. Consider the moral status of the Catholics who have immigrated here. Of the Italians it is as true as when Shelley wrote that their religion "is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and, without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so." Here with us only the other day two Italians knocked down a man, rifled his pockets, and left him insensible—or dead, they did not know which. An hour or two after they were arrested while praying before the shrine of a saint into whose receptacle they had put half of their plunder—to buy off the saint and to gain his good-will and protection.

I am not to judge of the moral teachings of the church by the miserable and ignorant, but go to the prosperous Catholics? Ah, then it is not a question of

church and its teachings—it is simply a question of civilisation external to the church. The more prosperous Catholics meet with and learn from the advance guard of civilisation. The church has no hand in the matter. But its claims are the other way. You say more than I against your faith. I know, however, that civilisation will move on; and the church will move on in the future as in the past among the lame and impotent of the rear guard—unless, indeed, it teaches that form and ritual and ecclesiastical observance will not save their immortal part, but solely pure thoughts, clean hearts, speaking the truth, righteous doings to one's neighbors. With all this the church may have set out, but its teaching of the ethical code, the spirit, has been so preyed upon by the fungus growth of material form and canonical observance that ritual has become the prime thing and the soul of the teaching is withered. God is in reality broad-minded. Hence the emphasis of—the use of—any

ritual is a detraction from God's inherent greatness

The highest and most fruitful upbuilding of our lives is character, as we were saying, and that your institutions and your faith destroy. Just so far as countries are Catholicised, just so far is there stagnation. Morals are at low ebb, and the mind and material resources of the people either undeveloped or impoverished to support the priesthood. Just so far are the relations of men and women degraded, and personal liberty, independence, and grace of character of less estimate. The Catholic has not the right of independent judgment regarding the great questions and acts of life. A Catholic is not free, and freedom—in which character may grow—is the dearest of earthly possessions. Without freedom life is a curse.

XVII,

In all situations women have more cause for suffering than men and they suffer more. The man has strength and the power of exercising it; he acts, moves, thinks, occupies himself; he looks ahead and sees consolation in the future. . . . But the woman stays at home; she is always face to face with the grief from which nothing distracts her; she goes down to the depths of the abyss which yawns before her, measures it, and often fills it with her tears and prayers. To feel, to love, to suffer, to devote herself—is not this the sum of woman's life?

BALZAC.

You have promised to write and you do not. My heart misgives me. Are you ill?—you who are far away in a prison—you whom I love. What awful thing has come upon you? The agony that is with me night and day because I have no word and because I am inextricably bound up in your being—if you could for

a moment understand you would pity and come or send a word.

Do you remember two years ago when you used to say you were miserable if a day passed without your seeing me? And do you remember one evening we could not agree and we chanced to meet next day in the rain by the old burying-ground? Your face that day—how it tore my soul! And you remember how you came home with me, the rain still falling, and we sat together on the broad divan, and I put my arms round you and kissed you, and the impenetrable sorrow of your countenance melted away? Have you forgotten those days? Is your heart hardened towards me? What have I done? God knows I have sacrificed every conservative feeling—those which control my former associates—in which I was bred.

I cannot find peace. If I lie down to help my aching head and back, my brain begins its wearisome retrospection and searching inquiries of our life together,

and suggests such possible torture in the future that I rise in a frenzy and rush nervously here and there to ease the mental pain. What word has been spoken? Do you not see that the only way is to be frank and fearlessly honest, and never do a cowardly thing and negate the pulsing, loving, human heart God has given you? Don't you know that loyalty to one's affections is a noblest virtue?—to be true to the best in us? If once again there could be between us the old confidence and the old trust.

I have been longing to see you ever since I awoke—but then I long to see you all the time. Your face is before me awake or asleep. It comes with a peculiar, flower-like beauty. I have told you this before. At times it seems like a blossom—a human blossom. I think of you, my sensitive plant, devoting yourself to your enslaved, unawakened poor, they not able to comprehend your tender spirit, and I say what is the meaning of it and whither does the finger of God point?

Their ignorance and pitifulness does not let them perceive that their priest's position is absurd and that he has need to masquerade. They misconceive his nature, think him different from other men, and he knows if they are undeceived a great part of his power over them is lost. And so he keeps up the hypocrisy—at times with such a physiognomy as Father Oran's as a result.

Do not put me out of your mind and out of your heart, but rather go with energy and resolution about your work. And every noon when in coming back you do not find me waiting with kisses and cheering words, say in your mind, "She is not here and is therefore heavy-hearted." And at night, when you return again, say, "Still she has not come. God hasten her coming and keep her stout-hearted during the weary waiting." Oh, you who believe in the service of the lips, have you ever prayed God to give us to each other? Have you ever lived up to your teachings in that thing? Re-

member Gregory: Deus vult rogari, vult cogi, vult quadam importunitate vinci. Ask God, force God, conquer God with your prayers. You must. We must.

As I sit afar and endeavour to gaze calmly at you, you seem like the old Rhodian marble—the priest—the Laocoön—crushed against the altar by a serpent that has fastened you in its coils. You sit horrified and transfixed by the fierce and vindictive strength striking at your very heart with poison.

Do not desert me. Let us have faith in our future. You would not take away my faith in you as the gentlest, truest and most tender-hearted of God's creatures. I cannot harm you. God is with us when we are together, and prompts all my feelings and thoughts towards you. Yours in your most Sacred Heart sends you a thousand kisses. I write again to-morrow. "The time for silence is past, and the time for speaking has come," said Luther at Worms. "Here I stand, I can do no otherwise, God help me."

Where you have done the greatest wrong is herein—you have taken from me forever my life. That is an awful deprivation of any human soul. It means misery, inaction, death. How I should have joyed and sweetened and grown to larger nature under the love of The One, and how great a return I should have made him for all his love, I cannot measure. Now it is passed forever. I cannot live with your love, and I cannot marry another with our love in the past. What shall I do? Sit and gnaw my soul in remorse for the passionate vows and kisses you gave? They were sunshine. All the rest is dreary shadow—resignation and black death.

It stabs me when I think there are no more of the dear confidences, the saying, "I looked at your window as I drove past late last night, and wondered if you were dreaming of me;" the beautiful letters shy and tender like yourself; the telling family joys and sorrows; the talk about the last books. A great pain enters my

heart while I think of this, and finds the house deserted and confused. And the pain grows and increases until it would fain burst the poor gnawn dwelling for its own relief. Oh, if it would, and let out the life-blood which pulses for you.

The strength of our love is possibly in our essential differences. What you take lightly has for me all that lies in the life of a mortal between birth and death. You ask for my love, and talk in sweetest confidences of our married life, and within forty-eight hours you say lightly as you swing off to your train:

"But, dear, I never can."

"Can what?"

"Marry you."

And I cling to you crying, "Dear heart, you kill me. Remember what you have said and done. Do not say that."

"But I cannot. My faith I cannot unbelieve."

"Darling, my precious," I cry, "remember what you have said. Say one hopeful word before you go. Do not

hurry. Just one word of hope." And you put your arms about me, and your lips close to my ear, and whisper, "Love, love, I shall always love you."

I sink back. You are gone. And I am not satisfied.

These long, long hours of doubt! The ache at the base of the brain, the ceaseless turning of body and soul! I am fixed fast in a position where I would have sworn I could never be—to despise the powers that govern a man and his very motives, and yet to love him with such adoration that my reason will not, or cannot, subdue my devotion.

In the eternal Nemesis, I say, God will make the church pay for such pain and sorrow which I for other women suffer. By a child's accident I met you and could not help loving you. Love came, I did not seek it. God gave it, and such gift is not to contemn, to put aside, to tear from my heart if I were able. Life to me was sanctified, made sweeter and broader

because of the love. I loved you and therefore loved more and more steadily all the world.

"No," said the church, "the love of a man for a woman—his love for you—or of a woman for a man—your love for him—is impure, degrading, unholy"—that, when it was heaven to be under the same roof with you and rapture to touch your hand—"the purest life is the life destitute of the devotion and love you feel. I have him. He is mine. As a boy he promised to obey me and to prostrate himself before my pronunciamentos old and new. It is a sin for him to utter one word of endearment, to press you in a caress, or to think of you with a single loving thought."

Your sad face has been coming between me and my book all day, and I stop here in the middle of reading to speak this little message. Life is hard without you. It is hard to go about and force a factitious interest in the day and

its works, the heart ever hungry and starving for a kind touch or loving word. A hundred times a day the consciousness of it pushes itself through my will and its attempted interests. I have hoped constantly against overwhelming odds, and now even that hope is gone. And you, love of my soul, is it so with you? If it were, would you do as you do? I fear the letter I wrote Sunday misrepresents me. I want to see you—I crave to see you—does the letter say that?

Have you seen the number of the "Catholic Review" which founds an argument for the development of Christian doctrine on the scientific doctrine of evolution? Shades of all the martyrs the church has burned to snuff out science! How massively impudent! If the church admits the belief of logical and scientific development, there is an end to its papal infallibility and the infallibility of councils—those things to the decrees of which you are a bonded slave. You are free. Your spiritual mother would have had a

public roasting of the writer three hundred years ago (when the laws you obey were made) if he had hinted at a tenth of the notion. The world moves, but what with popes and councils it has a tremendous weight pulling it back in its effort for human freedom and human advancement.

In turning over an old number of another magazine I find this sentence: "But of all tragedies that are ever enacted within the theatre of the human mind, what one is so pitiable as that in which a pure being prays to be forgiven that one feeling of nature which is the revelation of all beauty, the secret of all perfection, the solace of the world and the condition of immortality." Could the writer have known you? Then on another page you find that the pope's brief for Talleyrand's secularisation—Talleyrand the bishop—was dated from St. Peter's at Rome, the 29th of June, 1802. Do you remember you have told me insistently that such instrument had not been issued during

this last century? You know so little of the mechanism that restrains you!

I have sometimes thought I was a mirror to your feelings and passions, I feel so intensely what you tell me that you feel. Rossetti touches this in the sonnet where his beloved gives back no image to the protests of the one she does not love, but reflects the passion of the true lover. It is this thing in woman which in its abuse leads to the seraglio. For if a woman truly and devotedly loves a man —such a woman as I, such a man as you —the outside world is of little value except as it touches her sympathy for humanity. As the position of women now is in our present social order, she is happiest in staying much by herself and giving herself to love thoughts of him, glad to leave the world-struggle with him. This is true. I feel the instinct, and I long to yield to it.

XVIII.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What Man has made of Man.

WORDSWORTH.

THANK you, best beloved of all men, for your letter of Friday. It came yesterday morning at half-past eleven and took the weight of fear that you were ill from my mind. When I heard his whistle I ran to watch the postman crossing from house to house far down the long avenue. Hunger for some word from you was gnawing at me. At last he came up under our elms and oh, the sure joy I felt the news was from you! It was sweet of you to try and get the letter to me by an early mail. Nothing touches one quicker than affectionate care like that. You seem as

you used in the days—it is long now—when we both had hope and trust and stood together facing our difficulties hand in hand.

An hour before the letter came I was anxious enough not to control myself and I sent a post-card. After I posted it I remembered that I left the *ti* off scripsisti—but I know your violet eyes will read it aright. The occurrence reminds me of Heine's "Den Romern wurde gewiss nicht Zeit genug ubrig geblieben sein, die Welt zu erobern, wenn sie das Latein erst hatten lernen sollen. Diese glucklichen Leute wussten schon in der Wiege, welche Nomina den accusativ auf *im* haben." As for *your* daily quota of Latin, I watch the hands of my watch every morning and on Sundays breathe a sigh of relief when I see it is half-past twelve, and know your little play in that dead tongue is over for the day—for the morning, at least.

You are unhappy, you say, and crave something, you do not know what. But

I know. It is some response to your nature that you crave. You have none as you now live. Do you think if we were married—if after your repulse I may make such a suggestion—and each had the utmost confidence and trust in the love and steadfastness of the other that you would "crave something"? No. The craving would cease, for there would be the output—expression—of yourself which is natural to every normal human being. You live shut down upon, shut off, negating yourself in the strongest of all impulses to express yourself. Craving for action and expression and unsatisfied longing are the mother of unhappiness. You would grow mentally, morally, physically, if you would give yourself expression, and the craving and unhappiness would become a weary memory. When I write to you in this way I do not refer to one desire alone, but to all emotions and actions—and yet every feeling and thought in men and women is allied to the one. For your generous, exuberant

nature which would find its fairest ideal in domestic life there is but one road to happiness—marriage with her whom you love and trust, who trusts and loves you. This is my only answer to your words of craving. I crave something, too, but I know definitely what. I am sorry you are worried and anxious and upset. It hurts me that you are not better. You know we thought you would be after you had rid yourself of your incubus—me.

You say it is best for us to be separated. And are we not? What more do you want? Will you not be explicit? If the Jesuits had not trained you in their tergiversation I could understand—could have understood you—better. But their training—ah, God!—kills strength and self-reliance and sun-clear truth in every mind they have the formation of. Their teachings are a sirocco to fair natures. They blast and wither and shrivel the most generous and sweet growths. Many of your faith think as I in this

regard. The popes and Catholic monarchs who have endeavoured to suppress the order have thought as I and as I here write.

In a volume of Milton's prose which I lately had in my hands I find this passage which bears out what I have heretofore said. Martin Bucer dicit: "So there are many canons and laws extant whereby priests, if they married, were removed from their office; yet it is not read that their marriage was dissolved as the papists nowadays do, or that they were excommunicated; nay, expressly, they might communicate as lay men." And again, "Some persons are so ordained to marriage . . . . . and therein every one is to be left to his own judgment and conscience, and not to have a burden laid upon him by any other."

In all this great world I want nothing else but you—just your sweet presence—and why shall I not? Oh, to have you

and hold you and know you were all mine for a lifetime, forever. I could thank God for this gift of life then. Think of the little house by the sea where we have so often lived in fancy. Think again how sweet it would be to dwell there quite alone together—you and I—working and joying—you reading to me and I to you from our sure-minded books—you still clinging to Doctor Angelicus and Doctor Seraphicus. Think of the fawn-coloured sides and meek eyes of the Jersey you would milk and from whose milk I should make butter, and whipped cream, and beautiful white curd cheese. Think of our little road wagon and horse with which we should drive to the village after post and household necessities, all the way under boughs of old apple-trees and kindly-minded elms. And think of the berries I should pick, which you would declare were the juiciest and most aromatic berries you ever pressed upon your tongue. Think, too, of the sweet rye bread and brown bread and white

bread I should make for your butter and cream curds and berries. How tenderly I should watch over you, looking into the dear eyes every morning to see if the love-light were shining, and kissing you good-night with the quiet stars blinking assent through the window-pane.

Let us tell it to the world, dear. Let us make it frank and honest. Let us take each other by the hand and go out into the world. We cannot fail when we have faith in each other, and hope, and love. I shall always be patient and sweet. Men will applaud you and women who think and feel will uphold me. For others—quid interest? Do not ask me to give you up utterly. It means desolation. You would not take away all my life. All of us humans—and women ever—crave sympathy and love. You are life. You would not leave me. You are better and nobler married to me than to your church. You would not then be living a lie. All day long this thought has turned in my brain. If I drive it out

in one form it returns in another. This life as we now live it is cruel, derisive, and false. God always punishes such. What penance for this pretence can be in store for us? The best that is in me has been choked back so long! Oh, how this falsity and unnaturalness hurt! I cannot think it right. Rather it is a most hideous wrong.

If it is easiness that you seek, dearest, and a clear conscience, will betraying me to a confessor give it to you? Would you not be all the more miserable? For you would have betrayed and deserted one for whom you protest the supremest affection and who has supreme affection for you. Is not something wrong with teachings which inculcate disloyalty to one's best instincts? Can you not see it is bad to tell another whatever terms of endearment have passed between us? Why not confess to me? I will give you now and for evermore absolution for all but acts of hesitation and evasion, and a

majority of the world would tell you I am just as good and holy, and my absolution will have just as much weight with the omnipotent power as that of a Paulist father or other priest. Ah, I feel an enormous anger seize me when I think of the power of the humbuggery over you. To have you miserable and "penitent"! My heart, save me that last humiliation. To have my love for you served up to a bunch of withered old sinners who pretend they are ashamed of the nature God gave them. Dearest, dearest, can you not see that it is ungodly, inhuman, this demand that is made of you? Why will you put the power of the church before the power of Jesus, and the commands of ecclesiasticism before his sweet, simple dicta? Would he not tell you as I say, if he were here? He would certainly say "Live your fullest and completest life." You and I know what your fullest and completest life is. Oh, I fear with tears wetting my cheeks, that if you do this thing, a contempt for the one I love best,

and whom I hope to love and cherish immeasurably to my dying day, will grow within me. How can you be so cruel—but it isn't you!—to take the only hope and only desire from one worn by vacillating promises?

When I look back upon the long, exhausting three and more years with their pain of three centuries, there are several sudden turns to your sacerdotalism which are most mysterious. I cannot penetrate them. Poor fool, I have gone on loving and trusting and hoping, and now I want to die. I wish I could not see to-morrow's daybreak. Since your letter came this morning the birds' songs have lost their joyousness, no longer do the trees swing merrily in the wind, and all the time the iterating thought is striking me —why does the sun shine? and why is it all just as it was before? It is not with me just as it was before. To whom shall I turn? The one who was my joy and strength will have betrayed me in a few days. Who is there who will be my kind

and sympathetic friend? Dear heart, I know too well there is no one. I must go away and bury my misery from human eyes. Did not Mrs. Olney say right that your men would sacrifice any woman to their church? Et tu, Brute? Tell me, is there any place in the world where men will not sacrifice women to fetiches? I would go there.

Dear soul, I have written this between showers of tears. If it is wild and discordant—my mind is wild and discordant, too. One moment I think and tell myself, "Say to him calmly to-morrow that he goes to his confession with your full consent and wish." But soon I am crying, "Oh, I cannot give him up, I cannot give him up." If I could make you forget your ecclesiastical past, I would not give you up. Priests who have married, have they been troubled, as your fears are, by their past? Is it really true, I constantly ask myself, that you and I are to be sacrificed to mediæval superstition and East-Indian ascet-

icism? Are we so diverse in nature and in interests that that which whitens your soul befouls mine, and that which makes mine clean condemns yours to perdition?

XIX.

The widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double. What I do
And what I dream include thee, as the wine
Must taste of its own grapes. And when I sue
God for myself, He hears that name of thine,
And sees within my eyes the tears of two.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

WHY is it I can accept your faith, but you cannot take mine, you ask? Here, now, is my answer at half-past eleven of this Sunday morning, and within hearing of the intoning of your honey voice. Because mine is the greater. When you asked the question you implied that yours had some secret truth, some subtle essence which one having once tasted could never do without. Not at all—except as superstition weakens and

always inclines its practiser back to its ways.

I could take yours as a ritual—what it is—but the greatness and freedom of mine would be still with me. I could take yours, dear, if that would bring you to me, or me to you. I could take it because mine is great enough to include all. I could take your creed, were it necessary, and explain it in philosophic terms, and enter your church with this explanation. There is no doubt they would receive me. A proof of how much yours is form—that it is essentially form—is that you teach it must be that form, that ritual alone to ensure the soul's salvation. (When I write this it seems as if it could not be true, as if a sane and rational creature could not hang the strength and independence of his life upon such arbitrary law. Yet I have heard it preached from your pulpits.) It must be your doxy by which you stand. Confess to me, my penitent, is not mine the broader, more self-respecting, more independent, more

rational religion? That I can take yours and still retain my own shows that mine is the more comprehensive and greater, the more truly catholic—does it not?

I am not a Catholic—from your point of Catholicism—and I do not believe God demands human sacrifice—sacrifice of that dearest and best to us. Wherefore I do not think it right to give you up. If I believed in human sacrifice I should urge you to act as you do. Yea, if I believed, then I should hold my saviour in my mouth. But you, most dear, are he who can save me and turn my life from infinite misery to infinite bliss. Can you not understand, dear heart? Can you not have a glimmering of the light? I crave your sympathy and love with infinite yearning. When you are close beside me, and touch me and breathe upon me and look into my eyes, you know I believe in you and adore you. But you are more to me than that, you are divine. Your touch burns and your sweet breath is like incense—I take long breaths to catch its fragrance,

and I cry in my heart, "Oh, God, melt and merge me in him. Let his soul be my soul, and his body my body, and his will my will." To be individual, one alone separate from you, is agony. I cling to you and pray I may be dissolved in you, and never know myself any more. You would be my Nirvana, most dear, and no East-Indian zealot ever longed for passionless unconsciousness as I long with passion and consciousness for absorption in your existence—your life and being and feeling and thought.

When I heard the chimes this morning I wanted to be where I could see you, and my resolutions were so chaotic that when this afternoon came I could not help but go. Once there I dreamed of the day I got back from Starcrest and the changes that have come in the six months since. How like a wounded, hunted doe I felt that day. How I longed for your presence and touch. How I sat weeping in a

dark corner till the women had finished their beads and the simple creatures had had you bless their scapulars. Then all the fever and agony of the endeavour to get away from you swept over me afresh—how in all the striving I only loved you more and felt more closely drawn to you—if that were possible.

You see one difficulty is that ever since I knew you I have felt you were a part of myself, as if we were long ago a complete whole—a perfect apple, as the old saying is—and only lately the two halves had again found each other. And thus sitting there with the shrill voices chanting untunefully still ringing in my ears, I thought how often you had been in that place, how many times your foot had pressed the red carpet about the altar-steps, and how many times you had bent your knee and pressed your lips to that inanimate marble. Your ritual seemed more weak and puerile than ever, for it kept forcing upon me the reasons of its growth and final establishment. "Is it

possible he can leave me for this!" I exclaimed. But I thought afterward, "It is not for this he leaves me. And he has not left me and will not leave me."

Dear heart, I cannot tell you how many prayers I have that you will grow stronger in your vacation. There is such wistfulness in the dear eyes—that they were here to kiss!—and such weariness in the dear figure! Oh, I want it to be so different. You should be glad and joyous in the fact that God has given you a body, to abuse which is a sin, as well as a soul; and clear in the thought that abuse of the body must result in a depleted soul and depleted character. That is for what I contend, not only for your soul and your character, but for the beautiful body God has given you. Now since you spend fifty weeks of the year in the care of the soul, won't you live the remaining two wholly for your body, its health and strengthening? Let the sun beat down upon it and redden it and stimulate the skin. Lie in

the heat and dream and doze. I have a good deal more to say, but the time is ten o'clock and I must send this to the post. I send you a thousand kisses for good-by and a thousand hopes for us both. I shall think of you every moment, and sometimes speak your name, half dreaming you are not so far away from this dull room.

Did you ever think what a tremendous chance the pope had—if he were really a great-minded man with a heart of love—to unite all sects and all creeds?—to put away the puny, narrow, arbitrary dogmas which barricade him from the real life and thought and onward march of the world? The difference after all is slight between Catholic and Protestant, Jew and Gentile—all a form of definition and ritual. They are all humans. Why, all worshipping the same God, the one original source of all power, why do these humans not drop husks and trivial differences and absurd ritual and meet on the

common ground of human fellowship? What spiritual progress the world might see, if they did! But I notice that when the Protestants ease up and hold a hand of brotherhood to the Catholics, as is the present tendency in our country to-day, the Catholics "get in their work" by wholesale advertisements at proselytising. Many are like myself in religion, with intellectual affiliations with advanced radicals and admiration for the art and historic tradition of the Catholics. But because of the inertness, the deadness to any but past centuries, the devitalising separation of your church from the eager, pulsing life of to-day, just as surely as the sun goes on shining and no cataclysm wipes humanity from this dancing ball, just so surely will the church find death throes upon it. A long time yet it may stand. Stanley's pygmies may need it for hundreds of years to come. But so surely as their mental maturity is reached, so surely is its destruction complete.

Because I cannot see you immediately to greet you, I send you a word this last Sunday night of your absence. You will come to-morrow according to the dear letter you wrote, and according to the dear post-card all in Latin which reached me yesterday. Doctor Peccavi forgot to post the letter and I did not get it till the Friday after you had written it. You cannot think of my joy at seeing it. I read it, and kissed it, and put it under my pillow, and had the first real rest since you disappeared down under the trees. I have so many questions, and what an eager desire to see you! You are brown and better, I know. But what have you done and where have you been? Was the water blue and the air cool? It was hot and prostrating here, and so I was glad you were away. I prayed God every day to keep you and make you well, and bring you safe, and when the storms have burst upon us I have cried in heart, "Keep him, oh infinite power, keep him and protect him." Oh, to see you and

touch your hand! This is only a word of welcome home. There is a volume to hear and tell.

XX.

Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:—
O no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken.
SHAKESPEARE.

I MUST see you. Again I tell you I will not kiss or touch you if you wish me not to. But I must speak with you. Will you come this week—Friday? Thursday?

The letter you wrote last night came an hour ago. It gives me most awful agony. I am ill for two days, a prisoner in my room. It is killing me. Oh, you do not know what you do when you cast back upon me this great love—which has grown to such strength only under your expression of like ardour. God will punish you, I fear, for your contempt for the

sweetness and gentleness he has put in your heart for me. To follow that and not superstition is to do his bidding and be true to your duty.

Dear love, I cannot write. But my poor brain will turn and turn all this afternoon and night, and countless other days and nights, thinking of our love and how I—*we*—builded on its happiness. Oh, you cannot be false to all you have said and done—you who, I have said, had the truest and sweetest loyalty in the world. Do you think God can countenance a power which teaches men such dishonour? My darling, if I could put my arms about you, and talk of our unities and disunities once more!

You surely are ill. You cannot be so hard. I cannot believe it—I cannot believe it—that one whom I love more than life and all else would sacrifice me to a mass of barbarous traditions and usages. The impossibility of it comes upon me afresh. We are deluded. It is a hideous nightmare.

What is it that you are forced to study or read in your office at this season of the year that so terribly works upon you? Last winter it was so. Even the winter before, in the newness and freshness and abandon of your decision for a better life, I could see it. What is prescribed for you that makes you fear? There is a time in the summer, too. How knowing of the church frequently to put something in her lessons to harrow the tenderer, more self-examining soul! Those were canny creatures who entrapped you and prepared tortures for your sensitiveness.

It seems weeks since I saw you. Every day is unending. This sleeplessness—I fear the madhouse or a hospital. If something helpful and hopeful happens —when something helpful and hopeful does happen—I shall be well again. God meant each of us to have a portion of sunshine. But men make us go long without it and sicken.

I do not mean to cry out for fear it will depress you. But life is hard just now.

I hold my face in my hands and weep afresh when I think of our most miserable plight, and you far away. I wonder what you are doing at five o'clock of this afternoon. Your sympathetic face comes before me. Do you remember how you used to clasp one arm about me and pull down my collar with the other hand and bite my throat, and say to my protest, "But I like to bite you." You bear!

I cannot put it out of mind. You and our long yearning I cannot put away. It has been the great serious thing of life with me. It overrides all else. It thrusts itself between me and every duty. It is the great strength of my life to-day. What can I do? Between me and this paper upon which I write come your dear countenance, your eyes, your kisses and repeated protests of devotion. I lose myself in memory of them and become unconscious of whatever else is. Active will cannot blow through my love and clear it of misty passion. I seek to make it until I fall exhausted, and then the tenderness

in my heart warms and sparkles and vitalises in the pure sunshine of love. I am its slave, bedewed and stumbling, till I gain strength to repeat the drama, or lead the will for the time a puppet protagonist in the play.

What are you doing this dark, rainy day? I fear to think you are keeping to your room. Do not house. Take exercise in the open air every morning and afternoon. The last time you came your appearance disturbed me. It was so forlorn and hopeless. The springs of your energy and buoyancy and health seemed to have become dry. There was a sickliness over your face and in your spirit. But I was happy because you were here. Still you looked so tired and full of care withal that my heart aches for you yet. I should like to take you this morning as a mother takes her baby on her lap, and rubs him with mild water, holding up soft linen to defend the tender body from stray draughts. She washes and pats the

tender skin, brushes up the brown hair, and lulls him to restfulness. Then finally I should put you away in a cool, shaded cot, like the baby, for a sleep. With such care the sad grey shadows would melt from the face, and at last you would repay me by awakening and saying I had made you anew.

I fear you will think I speak too freely. You know it is love that prompts, and it is hard to keep quiet when I see you doing what I am confident is harmful to you. You do so much that is harmful to the soul about which I am forced by circumstances to keep quiet. May I not protest about the body? Think of your long fasts and their results upon your health.

"As what a man sees so have his thoughts been," sings Arnold, the Matthew Arnold you say you cannot understand because you are really so little in touch with the thought of your times. But the line tells the truth about you. You are holy and sweet and honest by nature. Heaven did not make you a

Catholic—you are too free-spirited, too manly by nature, your surroundings have hemmed you into such a faith. You have the mental inertness of Catholicism. This is a great reason you continue in your present life instead of taking hold with active assertion and making your life what you say you wish it. The mental indolence of Catholicism has had far-reaching results in the world's history. Compare Protestant Switzerland with Catholic Switzerland. Look at Spain—ignorant, superstitious, slothful, dirty, priest-ridden for centuries. The influences of Catholicism are truly "anti-economic" as some Irish leaders claim.

Who is it says, "The loftiness or baseness of the ethical code of a people bears a strict relation to the degree of their intellectual enlightenment; morality being the ethical expression or equivalent of a nation's mental attainment"?

XXI.

Were you the earth, dear Love, and I the skies,
My love should shine on you like to the sun,
And look upon you with ten thousand eyes
Till heaven wax'd blind, and till the world were done.

JOSUAH SYLVESTER.

I CANNOT help sending you a word to-day, the day itself is so fair and my heart is so full of you. Each moment this morning, and all day yesterday and the day before, I have been thinking of you, trying to fancy what strange incantations you were engaged in, and what genuflexions at each hour. At three yesterday I sighted relief, for then I knew where you would be until sleep should shut remembrance out of my soul. But there I am wrong. Sleep does not lose memory of you. I think of you, and dream of you, and love you asleep or awake.

This Easter-tide has a great significance, has it not? To you, we all know what. To me it stands for all revival, germination, life and growth, regeneration and renewal from seemingly dead seed. Only this morning I was thinking how this season of rejoicing has been kept by every intelligent people known to history. Among the Greeks there were feasts and mysteries at their springtide, and the Athenian altars decorated with blossoms from Mount Hymettus. There were their processions and hymnals, lamentations for dead seed in the ground and pæans for its springing and rising to the bright clear air of heaven.

And thinking of these things I could see how the stories and gossip and report of the simple-minded peasantry, among whom Jesus lived, had become commingled with the old legends and old faiths and customs of the Greeks. Then in addition there were Jewish tradition and usage. I think that after the church became organized it was a matter of

policy to adopt, exaggerate, and personify in Christian forms old pagan ideas which lingered among the people, and thus bring the multitude within its fold and command. It was practically expedient to do so, and practical expedience has always been the rule of your ecclesiastical organization. In this way it gained at first what it has lost since.

I would not be harsh in writing this to you—you know I would not. But I listen to your exposition of what you believe, and may I not speak too? You know we live in times when the other doxy has a chance. I cannot talk it to you, for I should feel as I always feel when I am with you—unable to set forth an idea, or argument, able only to suffer with you and be conscious of your presence.

May I send you this bit of green? It stands for a lily. It means hope and wishes to typify the resurrection of that which is best in us both.

And I will add more. I could no more believe that Jesus was conceived as you

teach him to have been, than I could believe Athena sprang full-panoplied from the head of Zeus. By the fiction of an unusual double nature in Jesus, the human and distinctively divine nature—such an absurd, and trivial, and childish conception!—you take away his sweet humanity and nearness to ourselves. If he were God of this great universe—God as well as man—the sacrifices of the man were nothing. Ah, we have all of us double natures, Jesus and each one of us, and with some of us deity prevails, and with others something very different from deity.

But here, in this Easter-tide, I have such love for you, my sweet. Oh, to clasp you, to hold you close, to feel the sting of your hand as it touches mine, and your breath and fragrant hair, to see your eyes—what is all the barren dogma of dyspeptic theologues to this? Dear heart, this of mine is not a common love. You know I have fought and striven against it. But you do not know of con-

flicts with great waves of feeling for you when I used to walk under the lindens night after night—when I first knew you. I loved you then because I could not do other. And I love you now beyond everything else in life because I am utterly powerless before the force of love that is in me. Resolutions to live it down, to live over it, are vain. It mounts above every feeling and every thought and dominates them all. Like a great elemental force it sweeps everything before it. It bows to nothing, all things subserve it, and it is lord of my soul. What can I do? And when I think you may desert me, what swells within me? A love offended, thrown back, wounded pride, and a certain fierce vindictiveness —not toward you but toward that corporation which damns in its God-insulting insolence your soul and life.

When you have said, "If we had money we should be married," you meant we are separated because we cannot control

vast sums. But have we not each other, and therefore are we not consciously rich? Yea, if we have each other.

But I have a lover who is yet not a lover. That is sad—to have all devotion and passion burning in one's heart and expressed in secret, but openly coldness and conventional unknowledge. What a delight it would be to say to my friends that I love you and will cleave to you until death.

Dear heart, why did God give this great love to me if it was not to be satisfied by having you? The question will not let me rest—you know it will not. How it pushes and prods and hurts day and night! This morning, for instance, when I awoke, it was three hours to dawn, and there I lay building, building another plan to bring the wished-for end. When sleep will not come to my eyelids that is what I have to do. And what better thing? The wish for you is strong.

Now in those early hours this plan seemed feasible. Every one was friendly

and believed our desire rational. I am not certain that they would not in an actual state of affairs. But one's perspective may be awry at the hours I did my building. You shall hear of it again.

Last night at sundown as I set out for a walk, I said to myself, "I feel as if the One were coming, so I shall not go far, only round Konon-wekah pond till I can see the top of Purple-knoll, and I shall leave word that I am back at once. Or perhaps it is a letter from him." I went and I saw the magnificence of the setting sun, and his shining upon lovely waters. And when I got back, lo, sun of my soul, lay the dear letter from you—you know which.

What a wonder the sun is, is he not? His going out of the day is the greatest thing about it. And what calmness! what surety and majesty! what incomprehensible magnificence! I doubt if in all these millions of years he has been dropping behind this earth, if ever twice he has made like exits. And how much

that setting of his has had to do with such organizations as your church. Have not men "moved west" because the sun set in the west? Isn't that natural phenomenon the forerunner of "the course of empire?" The great glowing ball sinks behind distant hills, or dark waters, and leaves a suggestion in the mind of watching humans that peace, glorious habitations, unalloyed happiness, are beyond that flood of gold. Day after day the sun sinks, and many are his brilliant leave-takings. Sleep and dreams and long night hours come after. And the watching humans remember, and think, and dream, and begin to say they shall see what it is the sun seeks with such display of glory. So they turn westward. If the sun rose in the west and set in the east, what would have been our history? Whither would our Aryan fathers have turned those thousands of years ago? Would Tokio have been Athens, and San Francisco Rome?

This is not pretty paper upon which to

write to you, but I should seek in vain for any fine enough and rare enough to bring you the love and embraces and assurances I send.

XXII.

E'en so we met; and after long pursuit,
E'en so we join'd; we both became entire;
No need for either to renew a suit,
For I was flax and he was flames of fire:
Our firm-united souls did more than twine;
So I my Best-Belovèd's am; so He is mine.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

THERE is nothing to write, dearest, but the same old legend. You have heard it and read it so often before that you know it by heart. Just now as I went to post a note there rose in me a conviction that you might expect a word to-morrow—and I know what the heart-sinking is when one expects and does not get the letter of letters.

The other day when I saw you, your nervous, irritated manner told me more than your sentences. It hurts me when

I remember—and I remember most of the time—how you are perplexed and hunted and made uneasy by assumption and impertinent commands and vindictiveness. Naturally such things exist in your little world. And reinvigoration and cleansing and destruction of its false standards will never come from the priests themselves. As a body ecclesiasts are not noted for moral courage. The priest prestige gives the order means of living at ease, and a place of authority over their human kind. Men do not find fault with that which exalts them and assures them material prosperity—wine instead of water for drink, and toasted pheasants in place of mutton chop. If they see vices and abuses and toadying to factitious rank and money, it is in accord with the reasoning of the old Latin book of logic you lent me—to let abuses and vices be that good may come, *i.e.*, that the church may go on. It humiliates me that you figure in such scenes. The particular flunkey over you thinks the world

is a bal masqué and he is a chief of the dancers. I groan when I think of your anxious face and the pathetic quiver about the dear mouth.

"Hold things in their proportion." "Many things that men deem sins are not sins." It is the spirit, dear heart. The ritual is nothing. God does not care for that. Mutterings and genuflexions and passes of the hand signify nothing. To be good and helpful, as you are at heart, and true to the deep nature God gave you—God asks this of you and nothing more.

Take it off. Smooth it out. Lay it away in a drawer. Lock it up and give me the key. I will keep it to the end. Do with your priestliness as you do with your alb. I will keep the key so fast that you shall never find it.

There is something better than acquiescence in authority and belief in the immutability and inviolability of boyish vows taken in ignorance of their full meaning. Would you take the decrees of a legis-

lative body of the sixteenth century as competent for governing a state of the twentieth century? Would you take the platform of a convention called together to nominate a head officer (even if that head were autocratic)—would you take them to be infallible? to which you must unquestionably submit? But that is exactly what you are doing. In the church's conventions, or councils, there is and has been just as much chicanery, just as much wire-pulling, just as much self-seeking, as in so-called secular assemblies. Yea, and a thousand times more. Are you willing to be a puppet worked by a wire pulled by subtle delegates at the council of Trent? God forbid!

The church is the strongest example that the world knows, as I have said before, of the value of mere assertion. In the face of knowledge which means its ultimate annihilation it stands boldly forward and asserts its possession of the everlasting secret which men have always

been trying to guess. And although there are a thousand evidences patent to the populace that its assertions are most brazen, still it maintains its power over human souls by its strenuous and insistent assertion. So it is that millions of apparently thinking people accept it. In the past when some of its faithful importunately dug at it for more explicit evidences, it raised and spent its time concluding upon such vital questions as whether Adam was or was not a hermaphrodite—whether the world were created in autumn, in spring or in summer —where the pigeon that was sent forth from the ark and did not return found its mate. And yet so sodden a thing can affect your life and mine!

The secret marriage? Yes, if you can make a lasting truce with your conscience. Don't forget that it in a measure degrades me. It will induce new cares and fresh anxieties. But to see you every week, and to have you near me for ever so short

moments! How we should look forward to those hours which brought you! And how happy we should be when the days came!

It would be easier for me than your leaving the church—*now* easier. A year ago we might have borne up against the publicity and calumny and excitement such an act would have engendered. But now!—these months of agony have been too exhausting. I doubt if you could have strength in such a tempest not to bend before the storm. Difficulties we must foresee. And the inevitable worriment and anxieties of life—misfortunes come to the most favoured and certainly we should not be among the most favoured—all trouble would suggest to you the freedom from the merely living cares in which a priest's life is passed. You remember how Vronsky gave up his past for Anna Karénina and the memory of his sacrifices came up and poisoned him. Hatred for the one for whom he had sacrificed grew in his heart, and in some

strange way the love died. Thus would it be with you? Would memories of your early faith and days, of your quietude of soul and peace of heart haunt you? Would questioning thoughts come? Would you ask yourself if I proved all that you expected?—if your newer life had proved all that you had passionately fancied? Would the old habits and customs revive? "It had much to commend it after all," you would say to yourself of the priest's loneliness and circumscribed freedom, and independence in the control of his immediate affairs, forgetful of the once overweening passion you had to possess me. Every good point of your old life would come to you exaggerated. Weariness with the new conditions would gradually creep in. Then discord. Then an unquenchable longing for the associations and faiths of your youth would grow within you. Your love would be dead. And I?—I should stand a despairing shadow and your going would be my death.

But again the secret marriage? No, dear heart, you must not lead a double life. Neither one of us must think of living a lie. In any concealment we should be most unhappy. You must force yourself to live up to your professions. Tell me, by your casuistry should I advise you to follow a course of action which I do not believe right for any one to follow, but which I know you think right?

When I sicken with the struggle here I wish we were far away on the western plains, quite alone together if need be, where we could work our sustenance from the soil, and be beyond the daily sight and pressure of the starving, jostling masses. To take even one's daily food seems like taking sustenance from their poor bodies. Or if we could be near some military post, where you could labour among the soldiery—far away in that wild, free air. Think of the blessedness of it. If things vexed, if persons were rude—whatever disturbed—I should think that you loved me and I you, and we were together, and

all trouble would dissolve in glow and warmth and happiness.

But what shall I have done, dear love, under your promises and the secret marriage? Left all traditions and followed you with the faith in my heart that you are true. My rooms here are ample. I have looked about a hundred times and thought how they would do for two. And provided the second could come with clear conscience that his coming was right in the sight of the great God of the universe—not the puny, manlike God of popular definition, but the infinite moral force of all ages and all peoples and all religions and all worlds, even the remotest shining star of a sun—if the second comer could come to these rooms convinced that it were right for him to be with the one he loved, I am sure no palace in all the world could hold greater happiness. To be with you night and day! But it must not be unless you see God and man and life and its duties through larger lenses.

And yet to live with you as other women live with their husbands, to be loved and trusted by you—that is the only future. I will give myself wholly to you, if you wish. It will not be sacrifice in the light of love, for love knows no sacrifice. Yes, it shall be the secret marriage which you say is the only way. But let us not forget that that which you have always stickled to exalt and mystify to my eyes—the trick is so much a part of your education, dear, that you could not help it—from that moment your ecclesiasticism will be abased. All that has been said about secret immoralities of priests may by venomous tongues be said about you. That would be terrible—about *you*. You make your church, you see, a whited sepulchre.

I can control my own feelings, but I cannot master my sympathies for yours. For your dear self I would make any sacrifice. That is my gratification—to sacrifice myself to you. That is our secret marriage. To me it has joys. But oh, its

humiliation and pain—its awful *unrightness*. It is for your sake I am glad, not my own. It will be marriage without the honour of marriage, with few of its mysteries, and none of the sweet delights of the constant presence of the loved. Tell me, was there ever another couple who had yearned for each other, and grown thin and white and sleepless with longing, before they had the supreme kiss of married love?

You know how I have told you that when I see wives and mothers with their blossoming babies, I feel jealous and hard, and say to myself, "Why can I not be like these women and have what they have to fill my heart—a husband and children?" My vain shadows! Dear souls, my hand trembles as I write their name. Our dear, empty shadows!

It was only this morning that a pain came in my heart—a pain as of emptiness and hunger. "It aches for his kiss," I said, "a kiss which calls it to send blood rushing to the very skin in its

leap to meet his lips." Dear heart, my whole soul goes out to you and my whole body longs with a great desire for your touch and tenderness. The brain and heart nature gave me can never do their appointed work in life apart from your brain and heart. The best that is in me rises and thrives in your presence and my whole weak self is alive to the nearness, the beauty, and the strong, sweet grace of you.

We love each other and have passed through furnace for that love. It is impossible that we be not married. Not to marry is to strike with an incalculable disease the lives of both. It is sin not to follow the dictates of our better nature. It is not passion, but the imperious demands of our higher nature struggling for development. We must be together—either observing conventionalism and the voice of the world—if so it will permit—or scorning and at war with it. You say you cannot live without me. Love for you consumes my days and burns away

my nights. To be with you for even a short time each week—to watch you breathe and speak, to note the changing light in your face, to see your ready strong grasp and the turn of your educated hand—these shall be my compensations for what that God-and-man-offending corporation which controls you otherwise denies.

It shall be as you propose—we shall go to Hartington and be married, and then go on living as heretofore—with the exception of your weekly visits. You break no vows. You are true to me. A married man true to his wife is chaste. I shall say to my friends—if need should come—that I am married secretly and I cannot tell more. We shall be "one soul in two bodies," which Sir Thomas Browne terms a "most mystical union."

XXIII.

Yea, with thy sweet lips, with thy sweet sword; yea,
Take life and all, for I will die, I say;
Love, I gave love, is life a better boon?
For sweet night's sake I will not live till day;
Ah God, ah God, that day should be so soon!

A. C. SWINBURNE.

DEAR heart, I came home quite safely last night. You had put my soul in such a singing mood that the way was short. Noise, crowd, and staring lights made no difference. I was back with you in the quaint little dwelling, looking into your face and feeling the delight of your hands and breath. And every moment since I have avoided the people, endeavouring not to have converse, in order to keep your sweet presence and touch and voice near me. It is as with one who is cold and suffering in some frozen place and

he dwells with rapture on the soft airs of summer, and the sunlight and warmth and the dew and birds. So it is with me. I think of you. You are summer.

God keep and bless you for the sweet letter you wrote me on your getting home —no—on your getting back—"home" is where you and I are together. The little kisses * * * those and the "Yours ever" at the end. How dear they are and how they help fill the longing emptiness of my heart. How innocent, too, don't you see? how innocent!

And how happy we were down there in the little house, and you said they were beautiful hours, and you loved me better if that were possible. How my heart knocked at my ribs when we parted. No sacrifice—even our secret marriage—seemed great in that flood of love in which we were submerged. How I loved you as you stood there with shining eyes! "Oh, God, what would I not do for him!" I thought.

Because I know doubts are combating

you, I say that if Jesus were alive and here to-day, and saw how we loved—you and I—and knew what you had said and done in love for me, he would tell you "Heed not the letter but the spirit of the law of mercy and love. What avail genuflexions and incense, the sacrifices of mass and prayers, lauds and matins and all forms, when the soul which they encrust and sometimes smother is not there? Take thought of thy soul's honesty. Observance of all the incantations prescribed by all councils and synods will make thee no whit better unless thy soul holds its eyes in the eternal principle of human love, human right, and its own manliness. Remember the letter killeth the spirit, and ceremonials and scarlet mantles are often a husk which conceals the mummification of spirit and of feeling."

Love of my soul, will you not send me some word? Are you well? I think how you looked in our hurried interview and

I fear for you. And the poor little sentence in your note, "My peace of mind and heart are gone," is with me all the time. At one moment I am angry, at another I am melted with tenderness and compassion, and cry in my heart, "The dear love, how blind are his eyes in all his gropings for the right!"

To love and to trust are different. One can trust and not love. Again one can love and not trust, I know, in these sad days. I love you, joy of my soul, but oh, I cannot trust you, for to-morrow, I see plainly, at the bidding of some long-agone, self-seeking, ecclesiastical politician, now a mere handful of evil dust, you may thrust a rapier to my very heart.

You whom I love so tenderly, you will not drive me beyond the verge of sanity by such inexplicable conduct. Oh, you do not know how it oppresses me. You pledged yourself to write and you do not. My heart misgives me. Are you ill? Or what awful thing has come upon you?

If you could for one moment suffer the choking agony that is with me day and night because I do not hear from you, and because I am, now with our marriage, inextricably bound up in your being—if you could for one moment understand, you would pity me and come, or send some word.

You cannot tell another man, dearest, of our love, of my devotion to you, and your sweet passion for me. Long you have put the unrighteous act from you. You cannot tell the dreadful confessor of how you clasped me in your arms, how you have kissed me thousands of times. You cannot tell him, dear love. It would be dishonourable, unmanly. It is defaming me. It is treating sacrilegiously and defaming that which is most holy to the one who loves you and whom you love. You cannot, my beautiful. It is impossible.

Oh, I was a fool, a hundred times a fool. Why did I not know that if you

were false to your promises to the church, you would be false to your pledges to me? It is easy enough reasoning now—is it not?—but it has come too late. Protesting the profoundest love and giving it expression by acts and vows of eternal fidelity, and then at a whim, a caprice, the behest of an "office" or a "retreat," tossing declaration and memory of every consecrating act aside! Is not a savage, roasting his writhing victim at a slow fire, tender and gentle-hearted compared with such action?

Deep down within me there is always such a glowing strength and love for you. Disloyalty alone could make it bubble into madness—when your soul and face is like the sea and takes on the mood of the sky above it.

I take you by the hand in spirit, dear, and I ask you this: "You are sent out and published as a teacher of the people. Now if all men had your bad faith, what then of the affairs of the world? Would

they go on? All things in which men have to rely on another's word, yea, contract in writing like our marriage contract—corporations, exchange, trade, barter—what of them? Would they go on if held to by promises as false as now you assert were yours to me? We should lapse into savagery with such lily-livered vows."

Your powers claim that when the bishop ordained you there was a certain inpouring of the Holy Ghost. If this were true should you not be a stronger man spiritually than others? But are you better in right-doing than other men? Are you more true to obey the moral law and the natural law of God?—more tender to those who love you and whom you love?—more faithful to promises and pledges involving the greatest things in human life?

Your secret is safe. I shall not tell of our secret marriage. Your church will prescribe your penance—when you confess. What happens to me the church

does not take account of. In the law of this republic my ancestors helped to make and govern—where your foreign church is now installing itself as a power—you are my husband, I am your wife. "But," says your church to me, "he is not your husband, for I have forbidden him to marry. You may be his paramour. You cannot be his decent wife."

How can I turn?—whither?—a woman—a heart-broken woman—a woman without fortune. Did your church ever yet take account of a woman without fortune? while she was still on earth? In its arrogance and ecclesiastical pride is a woman—even if she proves a Joan of Arc—more than a grain of sand to be swept aside? Look at the faces and bearings of your priests when they talk with all women, save the excessively rich, and you will tell me my claim on you is naught.

Oh, I shall say to men, "Deny it all privilege. Deny it all power. It is so unpitying to those it has in its grasp. It

is a great mediæval, spiritual prison—with all the inhumanities of the old mediæval prisons of stone—where countless souls are perishing in secret dungeons which the hurrying world does not see and cannot understand—and these poor prisoners are deprived of true sunshine and of God."

XXIV.

But had I wist, before I kist,
That love had been sae ill to win;
I had lockt my heart in a case of gowd
And pinn'd it with a siller pin.
And, O! if my young babe were born,
And set upon the nurse's knee,
And I mysell were dead and gane,
And the green-grass growing over me!

ANON.

JUST now as I took up a railway map and traced my journey beginning to-night to your city, all the blood in my body beat and sang, striking to my very finger tips. My heart warmed and quickened as I saw in a flash the whole stretch of meadow land and wooded hill, and you at the end. I thought of your gilded dome, and the silvery grey of the house roofs as they would shine forth in the morning light. It was like the first

warmth and gentleness and dazzling brilliancy of spring. It tells me that all is not passed yet, and that you may be saved. "It is possible," I cannot help saying, "it is possible." You are the supreme fact of life. All else is inanity. I am coming, love, I am coming.

Tell your confessor, dearest, that, after many months of vacillation and even your final decision against it, you come to him because you thought it right. Tell him that to me the suggestion of your going was unutterably revolting—impure, unchaste, a degradation and denial of the dignity and beauty of your manhood. But when I knew you deemed it right, and wished to come to peace with your forms, I urged you.

And will you tell him, too, that a woman never loved a man more than I love you. Oh, soul of my soul, I have loved you, and I have lost you. And I love you yet in spite of this betrayal of me which I know you are to make.

There is certainly mind in, or behind —the originating cause of—everything. For does not everything teach us if we will learn? The smallest berry, the commonest weed, the triflingest fragment of inorganic matter tells us a story, a history, of a guiding force behind it, if we will look and listen.

"The minutest atom comprehends
A world of loves and hatreds."

Your God seems to me gross and material and limited by the personality and anthropomorphic qualities with which you endow him. The very nearness and humanness which you feel are beauties, which call you most frequently to the so-called divine presence, are to me revolting. I cannot come so near Infinity. It would not be to me the Absolute if it could assume any form or any peculiar presence.

And yet I hold mankind better and greater than you dogmatise. For to me we are the greatest flower of the unfold-

ing of Absolute Life—on this small planet of ours an evolution going on now these many millions of years. Whither this Life will lead, or what purpose it has, I know not. That is my faith—I do not ask. Is it not greater than childish demands for trivial signs and portents and material comfortings—the "presence of God"—oh, you of little faith?

I cannot lay aside the old Greek and nineteenth century Hegelian notion that the human soul is a beautiful energy pushing its way through the world, subject to cosmical laws of morality—the great Laws of which Sophocles sings—and most perfectly and best fulfilling its mission in overcoming difficulties and acting out its creative will. This is not your view—it is antipodal to what your church teaches. But the Greeks were right.

The farther wisdom and science carry us, the more remote and the more impersonal seems the first great cause. Wherever such a faith as yours has been

received and adopted as a formal religion—society being cultivated and intellectual—a genuine scepticism and contempt for religion have followed. The history of France is an instance.

> "Our love is principle, and has its root
> In reason, is judicious, manly, free;
> Yours, a blind instinct, crouches to the rod,
> And licks the foot that treads it in the dust."

Cowper is right. The puerile optimism, the childish denial of realities, the theory that whatever is is right, which I have heard preached from your pulpits, leads priests and prelates to unspeakable things—to toadying to people possessing money and power, to teaching those living in most noisome surroundings, deadly alike to morals and physical health, that it is "God's will" and they must submit.

Dear heart, you did not ask me to write to you, but all this most miserable day I have been remembering what you said in your last dear letter—that a word from me was strength and consolation to

you—and I am taking the courage to send you this. If it is not pleasing to you to have it, I will not trouble you again.

I cannot see that my decision of a week ago, and yours of yesterday, were not right. They were. But it is killing me to believe it. All night long I watch the stars turning in infinity and think of the past and our unforetellable future.

I say our decisions were right for us as things unhappily are, not as they more happily should be. It is not faith you have, dear, but fear. You fear the lying tongues of your people. You fear there may be some force in the incantations in which you have been bred and have preached to others. You fear to change your social status. You are a conservative by training and like best to abide by things as they are, even if they are not what you would have. I do not wish to anger you, dear love, but is not all this true? I have tried not to believe it. I would not have you change, for you are inexpressibly beautiful and dear as you

are—but ah, if you were a trifle more daring and a trifle more rational! Yonder pomposity could not then make you quiver as he lately did. God never meant such dominion—based wholly on factitiousness—or such subserviency to be in any of his creatures.

Dear heart, do not blame me for saying this. I think it. You have forced me to think it. But do not fear that I am crying out at our *too late* decision. I am not. I have bought it too dearly. I give up the last and best I had. There is nothing more to give, or lose, or in renunciation to suffer. It seems hardly possible I should live—that human flesh can endure after weeks of such agony.

Would it be too much if I ask you to send a little letter so that I may get it on my birthday? Thursday, you know, is that luckless day. Life is nothing but endurance. And one reason I want you to send me the letters I have written you is this:—if ever in the future—supposing I have a future—I am inclined to act even

in any small way upon the seeming sincerity, courage, honesty, true-heartedness of us mortals, I want the letters to go to and read over. They will, I fancy, tell me how I once believed one to be inalienably true and honourable and sincere and courageous—believed as much as in the existence of my own soul. You see I cannot shut my eyes to facts. Oh, I am ill, dear love, and perhaps I have written wildly. Forgive me if I have.

But I have always written what to me seemed true—nothing but the truth. Remember every act, and every word, and you will see that I have. I hope God will give you strength to live bravely. If anything happens to you, my precious one—if you are again attacked upon any side—write or come to me.

XXV.

Some love too little, some too long,
  Some sell, and others buy;
Some do the deed with many tears,
  And some without a sigh;
For each man kills the thing he loves,
  Yet each man does not die.

OSCAR WILDE.

WHEN I awoke this morning it was with the conviction that you misunderstood me yesterday. You have misunderstood me in so much that I beg you not in this to see falsely. I endeavoured to show you—and through long years—how I thought it right and just according to the great laws of God for you to act. To have acted on the lines we discussed would have been noblest and highest in conduct. But it would have been in contravention of established precedent and at

variance with conventional conformity. You would not.

"Now," I said to myself, "he would not accept my point of view, my rules, my laws; he feels that they are wrong. Then he must accept his own. There is no middle course. It must be either mine or his, or he and I are both doing wrong. I must try to help him to his own again. And once having obtained his own, I will help him to keep it always. That is the only good I can do for him, and it is the remaining sacrifice I can make for him. The agony of his reconciliation with old forms is in time over. He will not know the process is a cauterizing of my soul. But if he is happier, perhaps I shall be. If he is miserable, I know that I am. And perhaps if he becomes happier it may mean happiness for both of us. But whether it means happiness or misery for us all our lives, he must do as he thinks right, and I must constrain him and help him to do as he thinks right. And if I cannot—because he does not

accept them—follow what I think are God's greatest and sternest and most loving commands, then I can at least go on calmly and patiently, and in the end, perhaps, the pain of it will be my justification."

In this way I have spoken with myself, dearest. Is it not right? I cannot see it is not. The reasoning and morals are true throughout. If I am wrong in any point, tell me.

This is a cool, wet day, and while you are going about in the chill, Glyky and I are the only souls here. Everybody is away. Glyky wags his tail and looks up knowingly when I ask him where you are. And so we sit, longing for the sight of your dear face, and the touch of your dear hand. So we shall long through all the days that are to come

Your letter is just here, my own, your letter of Sunday and Monday nights, and reading and re-reading it with unconquerable pain of heart, I know not what

to answer. You accept what I say is right for you to do. But do not yet, dear heart. Not yet. I cannot bear it yet—unless it is essential to you. Not this week, please. Let me see you once more.

It is not true what you say—"if you had lived in strict accordance with your own faith you would be a better man," "being what you are it was wrong for you to give expression to love and take on other vows." But are you not better and nobler for such expression? That which makes you better and nobler cannot be wrong. Arguments from my point of view do creep in, you see, and enlarge our consideration of your action.

You say that when we have spoken of our duty "you could not bring yourself to speak and cut away all hope, doubtful as it was." My precious one, is there any hope? I have tried to accept what you told me that awful day as ultimate. But your sentence is the spar thrown to the one sinking the last time.

And you say that if you should follow

what I believe is the only necessary faith, you know and feel that you would be a better and nobler man than you are. Can you not, dearest heart, with me always at your side to help you, oh, so tenderly, along the new path? My head whirls with the old intoxication at the thought.

All we have to believe, dear, is that this world, this life, is an inexplicable, vast mystery—Absolute Life—God—working through moral laws, for which there is no word mighty enough, no word beautiful enough, and natural laws—God unfolding in an inexplicable way. We cannot know more, nor believe more. (To pretend to know more is lies and hypocrisy and fetichism). Whither this Life tends we do not know. Nor can we conceive how we sprang into being—the beginning of humanity. We are here, and there is naught for us to do but accept our condition, be helpful and tender to one another, and go on to the end. It must be right, dearest, and the greatest

faith, the greatest love and confidence in the Absolute is to go forward without a question, to do what we can simply and in accord with moral and natural law, and await the unfolding of the mystery beyond the stars.

I have written hurriedly for I could not let the morning pass without a word to you, my sweet, dear heart. You are not mean and ignoble, but you are my darling always. It is because you have so noble and sweet and human a nature that I love you. And I see, oh, so clearly, the pains and limitations of your life, through its ecclesiasticism.

Oh, I love you, and so inextinguishably! It is my life and existence—the love. You do not know the heartache that is in every day because I love you, and you are far away. If you were here I might tire you with ceaseless iteration of love you, love you—all the time my heart crying for joy at your presence. I struggle to lay aside all bodily and common yearnings for you. I cannot. When

I force them off for a few hours they come back upon me with terrible might and I ache to be near you, to touch your hair or cheek, to throw my arms round you and clasp you as a defence from those woes which seem greater than the meanest woman's.

This is a radiant morning. Are you thinking, I wonder, of what you promised to do? You said the time for your going would be the 20th, or about. I beg you not to make it impossible to do what I asked and you promised. Since it must be, send me a letter saying it is over, and over in the most quiet, secret and speedy way. I think about it all the time. Oh, I beg you do it soon as you can, and as carefully as you can. Do not let faith in human nature—do not let any faith in *him*—lead you farther than you have to go to ease your conscience.

Go through it, dear soul, and write to me as soon as possible afterwards. Will you not? I shall be unhappy if the 21st

passes and I have not heard from you. "What penance," I shall say, "have they imposed on him? A monastery? Solitude? Silence—with no word to or from any human soul?" You could not, dear heart, let them keep you from sending one message at least. I know you would not. Rather write me a letter tomorrow—a little one, if must be—and tell me when I may expect the other.

XXVI.

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight:
Fresh spring and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more—O never more!

SHELLEY.

YOUR letter—the dear, sweet, human thing—came in good time. It is as you say—"if I were there to help!" What an example of happiness and devotion we should offer to those people about you. In this, I must reiterate, your ecclesiasticism has made a blunder that will help powerfully, sooner or later, to its overthrow. Anything at war with human nature, and the supremest and sweetest part of human nature—that in which God *is*, if God is anywhere in presence on this earth of ours—anything at war with that divine unfolding cannot last. It must

go down and be purged and cleansed. If it has immortal seeds it may revive. Otherwise, it must die. The coarse and brutal animalism of married life in the old time—when the wife was the husband's chattel—and the priest's conception that that was the permanent condition of marriage, led to their ruling and the church's sin against itself. You see I am full of the matter. I could write a book upon it. It might be a polemic—called "The iniquity of the forced celibacy of the clergy."

But you do me injustice, dear, when you say that I am prejudiced against your organisation. Think of all that has happened. With the knowledge I have gained, could I think otherwise? Its power over you is hideous. You cannot think like a free man because of its training, and you cannot act like a free man. It is, as I have said, a devil-fish which sustains itself by crushing you and sucking your life-blood—you and millions like you.

During the days to come, remember in the midst of all your posing and inanity what the service of God really is—it will give you a sense and strength and sweetness beyond bodily postures—that the way to be pure and good is to be pure and good in the midst of battle, and not off doing lip service to an anthropomorphic God a little smaller in mind and morals than the men who teach "him," and a little meaner and less shrewd than the devil—of which his priests also teach.

I am thinking of you, dear heart. "Only forty-eight hours," I said to myself this afternoon, "since he was here. Isn't it rather forty-eight days?" In that way I must perforce count time. Tomorrow I shall say "Seventy-two hours!" Next Monday, "Seven days, alas!" There was much left unsaid.

When you go to that place be lost in the multitude—look different from usual, if possible—disguise your voice, appearance. After you have spoken that mon-

strous man will not let you off without a look to find who you are. He will peep through the curtains of his confessional at you. Choose some stupid old fellow, if you can. Don't say there are not such. I have seen them. Properly treated such will be least likely to do you harm hereafter. Do not judge any one of them by yourself. You believe in it, and the chances are that he will not. Remember Browning's poem of the Spanish girl who told her lover's secret to her confessor.

You have a peculiar faith, confidence, trustfulness in that machinery and in human nature. *Do not let such faith be uppermost* during your hideous errand. Guard yourself. And if he asks you your name, or my name! I cannot think there will not be some question to you whereby he may later trace you. Hold no confidence.

You will pardon my writing this. Your "confessing" our beautiful love and tenderness and even your broken vows to me is in every way so hideous—so hideous

that I cannot begin to tell how revolted I am, how humiliated by such indignity. That anything I have ever said or done should be brought so low!

Tell me when you go and where. A hundred times already I have been with you in mental torture. I always think of the cathedral because I suppose there the priests have daily sittings. Write to me as soon as it is over. You cannot understand the tension and anxiety that consume me. I think of you and the awful exposure every day and all of every day.

Then, dear love, you will be fallen from me. I send you a kiss for those quivering lips, and an embrace for that warm, sweet body for every day of your dear life. These you shall have as well as your "offices." The powers about you cannot prevent my thinking them youward.

"O gentle wind, that bloweth south,
From where my Love repaireth,
Convey a kiss frae his dear mouth
And tell me how he fareth!"

Thank you for the letter. It came in the evening light. I read it and went out into the woods—to get out of the house—to get in the open where the airs move—to find the silent sympathy of the trees and sunset sky.

Our poor love! It has been so overpoweringly great and mysterious. How I have worked and wrought and plead and begged and prayed for it in my poor way, handicapped by your fate and my own! Sustaining hope was in my heart—that the time would come when we should live for each other and with each other. That would have eased and wiped away all sorrow and pain.

No one was ever so beautiful and dear to me as you were then, and as you are now, even with all this horror upon me—no one with whom I could be so happy and so heartily myself. Without you I shall never be able to do my life work.

And you, beloved, with you sweet, sympathetic nature—I take you to my heart and press you close with such yearnings

as a mother presses the child she must trust to strangers. There is an awful tragedy in your choice. My hope for you has always been that you would realise how much larger you are than your creed, or the power you endeavour to propitiate. But you have not, and you and I are apart. The fatal enslavement in your youth makes later freedom impossible. I think of your life—all the long years of it—and the little cares and vexations of which you spoke when you last were here, and I am troubled. I cannot think of your becoming unserene.

This is one of your holy days—I thought as I awoke at dawn this morning—the day of the pia sententia that the body of Mary, mother of Jesus, was taken to heaven—"up" they said in their poor ignorance of nature, but nowadays, when there is no "up," their superstitions still survive. The tale belongs to the time when there was an "up to heaven" which was a gold-paved city in the skies. You are my pia sententia

of to-day and my approaching holy week —the anniversary of the time I met you.

You said you would see me once more and formally. When you do come will you not send a note of announcement? I should be troubled were I not able to see you.

May God hold us in Everlasting Arms. The end of this world for me is not far away.

FINIS.

[The brave and loving spirit of Katherine Peshconet departed this life in October, 1904. Her sturdy baby died suddenly the following morning—it would seem as if appalled at his desolate lot—and the bodies of mother and child, clasping each other in lasting embrace, were laid to rest together. Doing "penance" in a distant monastery, the husband did not see his wife after the interview referred to in the paragraph above. His son he never saw.]

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